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SHARMA *Mughal Empire*



TOMB OF SAFDAR JUNG

# MUGHAL EMPIRE IN INDIA

[ 1526 - 1761 ]

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## PART III

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BY

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*"To know anything thoroughly nothing  
accessible must be excluded."*

—SIR OLIVER LODGE



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## CHAPTER XI

### NIGHTFALL OF THE EMPIRE

"When great leaves fall, then winter is at hand ;  
When the sun sets, who doth not look for night ?"

SHAKESPEARE, *Richard III.*

"Luxurious Kings are to their people lost :  
They live like drones, upon the public cost."

DRYDEN, *Aurang-Zebe.*

"Till sable night, mother of dread and fear,  
Upon the world dim darkness doth display,  
And in her vaulted prison shows the day."

SHAKESPEARE, *The Rape of Lucrece.*

The history of the Empire which we have so far traced has had a unity of its own, despite the apparent variety in the personal character of the Emperors themselves. Not to speak of Bābur and Humāyūn, whose work might be regarded as that of pioneers, "Akbar, the real founder of the empire," as Smith says, "was a man truly great, notwithstanding his frailties, and during his long personal reign of forty-five years (1560-1605) was able to build up an organization strong enough to survive twenty-two years of Jahāngīr's feebler rule. Shāhjahān, a stern, ruthless man, kept a firm hand on the reins for thirty years, and was followed by Aurangzeb, who maintained the system more or less in working order for almost fifty years longer. Thus, for a century and a half, from 1560-1707, the empire was preserved by a succession of four sovereigns, the length of whose reigns averaged thirty-four



(thirty-seven?) years, a very unusual combination. Even Jahāngīr, the weakest of the four, was no fool. The three others were men of unusual ability."<sup>1</sup> Bahādur Shāh, as we have noticed, does not consort ill with his predecessors, except in the very short duration of his reign. But this could not have been otherwise in the nature of things. His successors were definitely cast in an inferior mould, and were undoubtedly of poorer clay. No wonder, therefore, that "when the breath left his body," no member of the house of Tīmūr remained in India "who was fit to take the helm of the ship of state, which soon drifted on the rocks." The degraded wretches that "polluted the throne of Akbar" deserve only a passing notice; the rest of our history is filled with the tragedy of the disruption of the splendid fabric reared and fostered by the Great Mughals. The faineant Emperors appear only like ghouls in the thickening gloom of the night. The real makers of the history of the future, except in a negative sense, are no longer the descendants of Bābur, but their rivals and enemies. We might trace the following outlines of the fallen angels in the 'darkness (still) visible':—

I. The Faineant Emperors; II. The Brothers King-Makers; III. Nizāmu-l Mulk; IV. Disintegration of the Empire; V. Two Fateful Invaders; VI. Pānīpat and After.

#### I. THE FAINEANT EMPERORS

- (1) Jahāndar Shāh (1712-13); (2) Farrukh-siyar (1713-19);
- (3) Rafiū-d Darajāt, Nikū-siyar, and Rafiū-d Daula (1719);
- (4) Muhammad Shāh [and Sultan Ibrāhīm—Shāh Jahān Sani (II)—1720] (1719-48);
- (5) Ahmad Shāh (1748-54); (6) Alamgīr II (1754-9);
- (7) Shāh Alam II (1759-1806); Akbar II (1806-37); Bahādur Shāh II (1837-57).

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1. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 465.

‘As the splendour and delight of the garden of this world and the verdure and fruitfulness of the fields of this earth, depend upon the flow of the stream of the equity and justice of Kings, so the withering of the trees of this world is caused by the hot winds of the negligence and carelessness of rulers and dissensions among well-disposed nobles,’ writes Rustam Ali, author of the *Tarikh-i Hindi*. As a result of this, he continues, ‘In a short time, many of the officers of this kingdom put out their feet from the path of obedience to the sovereign and many of the infidels, rebels, tyrants and enemies stretched out the hands of rapacity and extortion upon the weaker tributaries and the poor subjects. Great disorders arose in the country.’<sup>1)</sup>

But before we turn to examine the nature of these disorders it is necessary to review the characters and conduct of the Emperors themselves. Although wars of succession were a feature common to both the periods, what is more striking is the contrast between the *Greater* and the *Later* Mughals in the number and duration of the sovereigns, before and after the death of Aurangzeb: from 1526-1707, a period of very near *two centuries*, there were only *six* rulers of the house of Tīmūr. From the death of Aurangzeb to the third battle of Pānīpat, (1707-61) only a little over *half a century*, no less than *ten* members of that family wore the crown. This was not merely accidental. Jahāndar and Farrukh-siyar were strangled to death; Rafiū-d Darajāt and Nīkū-siyar died in imprisonment, virtual or real, after a few weeks’ ‘rule’. Rafiū-d Daula died of mental and physical maladies within three months of his coronation. Muhammad Shāh, though he ruled longer and died a ‘natural’ death his system had been shattered by excessive opium-eating and self-indulgence. Sultan Ibrāhīm (Shāh Jahān II) was proclaimed Emperor only for a few days. Ahmad Shāh was deposed, imprisoned and blinded, Alamgīr II was murdered, and Shāh Alam II (who outlives

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1. E. & D., op. cit., VIII, p. 43.

our period) was disgraced and driven from his ancestral capital.

The key to these catastrophes must be found in the characters of these 'sovereigns.' Bahādur

1. Jahāndār Shāh : Fight for the Crown. Shāh left behind him four sons<sup>1</sup> to contend for his throne. Iradat Khān gives the following account of them :—

(1) 'Muizzu-d din Jahāndār Shāh, the eldest, was a weak man, devoted to pleasure, who gave himself no trouble about State affairs, or to gain the attachment of any of the nobility. . . . (2) Azīmu-sh Shān, the second son, was a statesman of winning manners . . . . (He was governor of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa) ; and though in the late battle (of Jajau) he had performed great service, yet he was suspected by his father and dreaded as a rival ; but to relate the causes would be useless prolixity. (3) Rafīu-sh Shān, the private companion and favourite of his father, was a prince of quick parts, a great proficient in religious learning, a fine writer, with much knowledge in the law, but at the same time addicted to pleasure, particularly fond of music, and the pomp of courtly show.<sup>2</sup> He paid no attention to public affairs or even those of his own household. (4) Khujista-akhtar Jahān Shāh had the greatest share of all the princes in the management of affairs, before his father's accession to the throne, and afterwards the whole administration of the empire was influenced by him. He had the closest friendship and connexion with

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1. For a fuller account of Bahādur Shāh's family see Irvine, op. cit, pp. 145-47.

2. One account says that he had 'the heart of a courtesan, devoting all his energy to the adornment of his person and the purchase of clothes and high-priced jewels, a man to whom the verse applied :

*Aina o shana girifta ba dast,  
Chum Zan-i-rana, shuda gesu-parast.'*

(Holding mirror and comb in hand, like a pretty woman, he adores his own curls.) Irvine, op. cit., p. 167.

Munim Khān, who, by his interest was appointed *wazīr*.<sup>1</sup>

The account of the struggle for the throne, given by Khāfi Khān, is too interesting to be omitted. 'One week after the death of Bahādur Shāh,' he says, 'was passed in amicable communications and correspondence between the four brothers about the division of the kingdom and property<sup>2</sup> .... It was settled that the Dakhin should fall to Jahān Shāh; Multan, Thatta, and Kashmir, to Rafiū-sh Shān; and that Azīmu-sh Shān and Jahāndar Shāh should divide the remaining *subas* of Hindustan between them. But the agreement about the division of the kingdom and treasure all turned into discord, and the partition of the realm was never effected<sup>3</sup> ..... The three brothers agreed together in opposition to Azīmu-sh Shān. All three, in accord with each other, mounted their horses, and for four or five days selected positions from which to fire guns and rockets upon the army of Azīmu-sh Shān. The artillery of Azīmu-sh Shān replied to that of the three brothers, and many horses and men were killed.<sup>4</sup> About the 20th of *Safar* the sound of battle rose high on every side, and the fight was begun .... Azīmu-sh Shān, who was mounted on an elephant, disappeared .... The ruffians of the neighbourhood and the soldiers of all the four princes fell upon Prince Azīm's treasure, and the vast sums which he had extorted by tyranny and violence in and about the *subā* of Bengal were plundered in the twinkling of an eye, and dispersed into many hands.

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1. E. & D., op. cit., VII, p. 550.

2. The body of Bahādur Shāh all this time was lying in state for the victorious candidate to bury! He had died at the end of February 1712; the body was sent to Delhi on the 11th April, and actually buried on the 15th May.—See Irvine, loc. cit., p. 135.

3. For details of the agreement and comments thereon see Irvine, op. cit., pp. 160-61.

4. One of the notable persons who died of the wounds received in this battle was Shāh Nawāz Khān Safawī. He was in the sixth generation from Shāh Ismāil Safawī, King of Persia (1500-24), and the last of that race who distinguished himself in India. Seven ladies of this family were married to princes of the Mughal Imperial house.—See *ibid.*, op. cit., p. 173 n.

The defeat of Azīmu-sh Shān was due to his over-confidence and greedy nature. For everything he could say *andāk bashid*, 'Wait a little longer'; owing to his miserliness in paying his soldiers it became a saying among them that the coldest place on earth was Azīmu-sh Shān's kitchen.

The three princes caused the drums of victory to be beaten, and then retired to their own dwellings.<sup>1</sup>

'Next day many messages passed between Jahāndar Shāh and Jahān Shāh respecting an arrangement, but without result and the course of affairs tended to the shedding of each other's blood. A battle followed between the armies of the two brothers, and raged from the beginning of the day to the third watch. Farkhanda Akhtar, son of Jahān Shāh, and several *amirs* of reputation, were killed. On the side of Jahāndar Shāh, also, some *amirs* and many men were killed. At length Jahān Shāh, mounted on an elephant, made an impetuous charge upon the army of Jahāndar, and bore all before him, and matters went so ill with Jahāndar that he was parted from *Lāl Kunwar*, his favourite charmer,<sup>2</sup> and had to seek refuge among some stacks of bricks. Jahān Shāh beat the drums of victory. The letters of the Rajput *sarāfs* carried the news of the victory to many parts, and the *khutba* was read with his name in several places. After the victory had been proclaimed, and the soldiers were dispersed in all directions hunting for Jahān Shāh, a cannon-ball directed by fate killed him, and his army fled.<sup>3</sup> Zu-l fiqār Khān's men hearing of this, attacked the elephant of Jahān Shāh, and brought it with his corpse, and the corpse of his son Farkhanda, to Jahāndar Shāh. Khujista Akhtar, another son of Jahān Shāh, with a younger brother, were brought prisoners to Jahāndar Shāh, who then proclaimed his victory.'

There remained Prince Rafi-u-sh Shān, with whom also Jahāndar proposed friendly negotiations about the division of the Kingdom.<sup>4</sup> Having put the Prince off his guard, Jahān-

1. The casualties are not known. The strength of the belligerents was as follows :—30,000 horse and 30,000 foot on the side of Azimu-sh Shān; 53,000 horse and 68,000 foot opposed to him.—*Ibid.*, p. 161 n.

2. Also called *Lāl Kunwar*, and said to be descended from *Tān Sen*, Akbar's celebrated musician. "There is a long poetical description of her charms in the fragmentary History, B. M. Or. 3610, fol. 18 b, which ends thus : *Ba khuḍi Lal Kunwar nam-i-u bud, Shakkār-guftār, sim-andam-i-u bud*.—See Irvine, *op. cit.*, p. 180 n.

3. A man wept all night at the bedside of a sick friend; when morning came, he was dead, and the friend was alive.'—Sh. Sadi.

4. The soul of these spurious negotiations for a peaceful partition of the Empire was Zu-l fiqār Khān. For his rôle in this fratricidal struggle, see Irvine, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-197.

dar sent a detachment of horse against him by night. Rafiū-sh Shāh fought desperately. He and his two sons threw themselves from their elephant, and fought bravely on foot; but he and several of his companions were killed. Three of his sons remained alive, but were wounded—Muhammad Ibrāhīm, Rafiū-d Daula, and Rafiū-d Darajāt (all three destined to wear the fatal crown).

‘Jahāndar, being thus freed from his three brothers, became the monarch of Hindustan.<sup>1</sup> He

Jahāndar as sent M. Karīm and Prince Humāyūn  
Emperor, 1712-13. Bakht, who were only nine or ten years  
old, the two sons of Jahān Shāh, and the sons of Rafiū-sh  
Shāh, to the fort of Delhi . . . . Mahābat Khān and . . . . other  
*amīrs*, more than twenty in number, were ordered to be con-  
fined in chains, and some were put to the rack and other  
tortures. Their houses also were seized. (Prince M. Karīm,  
having attempted escape, was put to death).

‘In the brief reign of Jahāndar, violence and debauchery had full sway. It was a fine time for minstrels and singers and all the tribes of dancers and actors) There seemed to be a likelihood that *kāzis* would turn toss-pots, and *muftis* become tipplers. All the brothers and relatives, close and distant, of *Lāl Kunwar*, received *mansabs* of four or five thousand, present of elephants, drums and jewels, and were raised to dignity in their tribe. Worthy, talented and learned men were driven away, and bold impudent wits and tellers of facetious anecdotes gathered round. Among the stories told is the following.

‘The brother of *Lāl Kunwar*, Khushal Khān, who had received a *mansab* of 5000 and 3000 horse, was named *subādār* of Agra. Zu-l fiqār *Bakhshīu-l Mulk* purposely made a delay of several days in the preparation of the *farmān* and the other deeds. *Lāl Kunwar* complained of this to Jahāndar, and he asked Zu-l fiqār Khān what was the cause of the delay in the drawing out of the documents. Zu-l fiqār Khān was very free-spoken to Jahāndar, and he replied, “We courtiers have got into the bad habit of taking bribes, and

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1. He was 52 lunar years of age. His titles were Abul fath Muhammad Muizzu-d din, Jahāndar Shāh.

we cannot do any business unless we get a bribe." Jahāndar Shāh smiled, and asked what bribe he wanted from *Lāl Kunwar*; and he said, "A thousand guitar-players and drawing masters (*ustad-nakkāshi*)."<sup>1</sup> When the Emperor asked what he could want with them, he replied, "You give all the places and offices of us courtiers to these men, and so it has become necessary for us to learn their trade." (Jahāndar smiled, and the matter dropped. As Kamwar Khān put it, '*The owl dwelt in the eagle's nest, and the crow took the place of the nightingale.*'<sup>2</sup>)

The frivolities of the Court soon became notorious, and all respect for and fear of the sovereign ceased. While the central government at Delhi was in this state of disorganisation and disorder, a claimant to the throne arose in the person of Muhammad Farrukh-siyar, the second (but eldest surviving) son of the late Azīmu-sh Shān.

When Azīmu-sh Shān was called to support the claims of his father, Bahādur Shāh, he had left  
 2. Farrukhsiyar. Bengal in the charge of Farrukh-siyar  
 1712-19. (1707). When Bahādur Shāh died, Farrukh immediately proclaimed his father Azīm Emperor (March, 1712). But when he heard of his father's death in April 1712, he was so dejected that he even contemplated suicide. However, his mother intervened saying, 'If he launched his boat on stormy waters it would, if God were gracious, reach the bank in safety. After all, what was life but a matter of a few days? Why not run the risk?'<sup>2</sup> Thereupon Farrukh-siyar took heart and proclaimed himself Emperor, going through the usual ceremonies, causing the *khutba* to be read and coins struck in his own name. But, as Irvine says, "No rasher enterprise was ever entered upon. Farrukh-siyar had been no favourite with his father or grandfather, and had been without authority or wealth during their life-time."<sup>3</sup>

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1. For the vices and follies of Jahānder Shāh and his mistress, see Irvine, *op. cit.*, pp. 192-97.

2. Irvine, *op. cit.*, p. 199 n.

3. *Ibid.*

When he arrived at Patna he had no more than a meagre following of three or four hundred men. None of the nobles whom his father had favoured would stir themselves on his behalf. But once again his mother came to his rescue. ~~She won over by methods peculiar to her sex, the powerful Saiyid brothers, Hasan Ali (later known as Abdullah) Khān and Husain Ali Khān of Barha,<sup>1</sup> who were respectively in charge of the governments of Allahabad and Bihar. They were the sons of Saiyid Abdu-llah Khān Miyan, who was successively *subāhdār* of Bijapur and Ajmer in the reign of Aurangzeb. Hasan and Husain, at this time, were men of ripe experience<sup>2</sup> and noted for being 'brave, proud, and lavish.' They had played a prominent part in the battle of Jājau, and had been rewarded with the rank of 4000; Hasan, the elder, had also been given the title of his father, *Abdu-llah Khān*.~~

Farrukh-siyar's mother now visited the old mother of the Saiyid brothers, represented how her sons owed their elevation to Azīmu-sh Shān, and claimed their support for her own son. "Let Husain Ali Khān then choose his own course," she said, "either let him aid Faruk-siyar to recover his rights or else let him place the Prince in chains and send him a prisoner to Jahāndār Shāh." The Prince's mother and daughter then bared their heads and wept aloud. These tears melted the hearts of the Saiyids and they pledged their support. This was a turning point in the careers of both Farrukh-siyar and the Saiyid brothers. They were further joined by Sidisht Nārāyan, an adventurous zamīndār of the Ujainiya clan who brought with him 10,000 horse and 30,000 matchlockmen, Saf Shikan Khān, deputy-governor of Orissa, and several others, each bringing his own reinforcements. But *money* was the great need in Farrukh-siyar's camp.

"Partial relief was afforded by the seizure *en route* of a convoy of 25 or 30 *lakhs* of Rupees, which had reached Patna on its

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1. See *ibid.*, p. 202 for the significance of this term.

2. They were respectively 46 and 44 years of age; Farrukh-siyar was 31 (lunar) years.



way from Bengal to Delhi. Requisitions in kind were also imposed on the traders in the city. The amount realized was two or three *lakhs* of Rupees. Some money estimated at from half a *lakh* to five *lakhs* of Rupees, was obtained by the seizure of the Dutch Company's goods, their factory at Patna, Jacob van Hoorn, having died there in July 1712. Even stronger measures were resorted to. There was one Surat Singh Khatri, the chief official of Nasir Khān, deputy governor of Kabul, who had accumulated great wealth. At this time having determined on sending his treasures from Delhi, he had hired fifty or sixty bullock carriages and loaded them with all his property, giving out that the carts were occupied by a party of his women and children with their female servants. They were guarded by a hired force of five hundred matchlockmen, and were halting for the night in a certain mansion. During the night the guard was absent. The house was attacked, the goods were plundered, and distributed among Farrukh-siyar's soldiers."<sup>1</sup>

At Kora they were met by Mahta Chabela Rām, *faujdār* of Karra Manikpur, 'a protégé of Farrukh-siyar's house.' His arrival was most opportune for the money in his possession; he now advanced Rs. 1500 a day.<sup>2</sup>

Jahāndar Shāh, on his part, had got news of these movements and despatched an army in advance under his son A'azzuddin and Khwaja Hasan (*Khān Daurān*). 'Zu-l fiqār Khān was aware of the limited capacity, want of experience, imbecility and frivolity of the Prince,' writes Khāfī Khān. 'He was also aware of the extraction, character, and evil disposition of Khwaja Hasan Khān, who was one of the lowest men of his time.... (But) the Emperor trusted Kokaltash Khān Koka and *Lāl Kunwar* more than any one else at his Court, and so he shut his eyes to what was passing<sup>3</sup>.....'

'No sooner had Prince A'azzuddin passed the Jumna than great disorder arose in his army in consequence of

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1. Ibid., p. 212.

2. Ibid., p. 215.

3. Chin Kilich Khān (future Nizām-ul Mulk was also directed to join the Prince, but either chose to temporise or 'was unable to do so for want of the means of transport.'

jealousy and want of co-operation among the *sardārs*, and the irresolution of the Prince.<sup>1</sup> On 28th November 1712, Khān Daurān recommended flight. But finding that his advice was not taken, he prepared forged letters in the name of *Lāl Kunwar* to the effect that the Emperor (Jahāndar) was dead, and that if the Prince returned quickly he could secure the throne. This had the desired effect. A'azzuddin hastened back to Agra, leaving his camp and equipage to be plundered by the enemy.

Hearing of this Jahāndar Shāh decided to march from the capital personally to meet the danger. But during the preceding eleven months everything had been allowed to fall into confusion, and during the whole of this time the troops had not seen the sight of a coin. An attempt was now made to pay them, and to provide the necessary *matériel* and equipage for a campaign. Most of the treasure, amassed in previous reigns stored within the fort of Delhi, had been expended in frivolous festivities. As one writer complains, the money had been spent in lamps and oil for a weekly illumination of the fort and river banks. Meanwhile, the zamīndārs, taking advantage of the disputed succession, had evaded the payment of revenue, and the officials, uncertain of their future position, neglected to coerce them and made many excuses. Such small amount of money as there was in the treasury was soon spent. Gold vessels collected in the palace from the time of Akbar were next broken up and used, and such fragments of gold and silver as could be found in any of the imperial workshops were appropriated. Warid, the historian, saw the process with his own eyes. All jewelled articles were next taken, and then the jewels themselves; after this, the clothes, carpets, and hangings were removed. As there was still a deficiency, the ceilings of the palace rooms which were plated with gold, were broken up and distributed to the men. Nothing else now remaining, the store-houses were thrown open and the goods distributed in place of cash.<sup>2</sup> A crowd assembled and no order was maintained. The soldiers took what they liked and paid no heed to the clerks. In a moment, store-

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1. E. & D., op. cit., VII, pp. 434-35.

2. According to a contemporary eye-witness, 'In one week, jewels worth 3 *krors* and 50 *lakhs* of Rupees were distributed among them.'—Khushhal Chand, cited by Irvine, op. cit., p. 220 n.

houses full of goods, which had been preserved from the time of the Emperor Bābar, were emptied. Nothing was left. Still, in spite of all these efforts, the claims of many of the men were unsatisfied, and they were told to wait until Agra was reached, when they would be paid from the treasure-house at that place.<sup>1</sup>

Under such auspices nothing but disaster could be expected. And disaster confronted Jahāndar Shāh at the battle of Agra (13th *Zi-l hijja* 1124 H.—10th January 1713). In spite of Zu-l fiqār Khān's desperate attempts to retrieve the situation, the Imperial troops fled, and Jahāndar Shāh himself ran off to Delhi. There he sought refuge in the house of Asad Khān, father of Zu-l fiqār. This was his ruin. That nobleman thought it expedient to inveigle the helpless Emperor into prison and surrendered him to his enemies. Feelings of gratitude and loyalty at first struggled for mastery in the breast of Zu-l fiqār Khān; but they soon subsided before the urgency of the situation. Jahāndar was now in a death-trap. Yet was he happy to find his charmer, *Lāl Kunwar*, still with him. On seeing her, he is reported to have exclaimed with joy: "Let the past be forgotten, and in all things let us praise the Lord!"

On 16th *Muharram*, 1125 H. (11th February, 1713), by Farrukh-siyar's order, written with his own hand, a group of ruffians entered the prison room. "*Lāl Kunwar* shrieked, clasped her lover round the neck, and refused to let go. Violently forcing them apart, the men dragged her down the stairs. Then laying hands on Jahāndar Shāh they tried to strangle him. As he did not die at once, a Mughal, with his heavy-heeled shoes, kicked him several times in a vulnerable place and finished him off.... The body was then thrown into an open litter (*miyana*) and the head placed on a tray (*khwan*). Half an hour after nightfall, they reached the camp with the lifeless head and trunk and laid them at the entrance to the Emperor's (Farrukh-siyar's) tents, alongside

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1. Ijad, Warid, and Khushlal Chand cited, *ibid.*, pp. 220-21.

the body of Zu-l fiqār Khān"<sup>1</sup> (who was also executed at the same time).

Such was the fate of 'Jahāndar Shāh, Emperor of the World, Lord of the Conjunctions,' as his coins name him :

*Zad sikka bar jan chun mihr sahib-i-qiran ;  
Jahāndar Shāh, pādāsh-i-jahā.*

He was 53 (lunar) years, 4 months, and 6 days old at his death, and had reigned ten months and twenty-five days. "*He was the first sovereign of the house of Taimur,*" declares Irvine, "*who proved himself absolutely unfitted to rule. The only good quality left to him, in popular estimation, was his liking for and liberality to religious mendicants. . . . . The cause of his fall is likened by Warid truly enough to the case of the exiled monarch, who attributed his ruin to morning slumbering and midnight carousing.*"<sup>2</sup>

The events described above are in themselves a lurid commentary on the character of both the new sovereign and his rule. Khāfi Khān adds : "*Farrukh-siyar had no will of his own. He was young,<sup>3</sup> inexperienced in business, and inattentive to business of State. He had grown up in Bengal, far away from his grandfather and father. He was entirely dependent on the opinions of others, for he had no resolution or discretion. By the help of fortune he had seized the crown. The timidity of his character contrasted with the vigour of the race of Timūr, and he was not cautious in listening to the words of artful men. From the beginning of his reign he him-*

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1. Irvine, op. cit., p. 254. The bodies of the unfortunate Emperor and his late *wazir* were thrown down on the sandy waste before the Delhi Gate of the palace. On the 14th Feb. 1713 Jahāndar's body was buried in the vault of Humāyūn's tomb, the family mausoleum. For the treachery and insensate cruelty that attended the 'execution' of Zu-l fiqār Khān and attendant circumstances, see *ibid.*, pp. 248-58. See also Khāfi Khān, op. cit., pp. 443-45.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 240-41.

3. He was about thirty-one at the time of his accession ; *ibid.*, p. 398.

self brought his troubles on himself. One fault he committed at the outset of his reign, in appointing Saiyid Abdu-llah, a Saiyid of Barha, to the office of *wazir*, which is such a high and important trust that former kings always bestowed it upon wise, great and high-minded men, remarkable for patience, experience, clemency and affability, whose qualities had been tested by long experience.<sup>1</sup> . . . . Mir Jumla had risen into the King's favour. He was a friendly, generous, and upright man, from whom many received kindness; but he was unwilling that the reins of the government of Hindustan should pass into the hands of the Barha Saiyids. When he saw that the sovereign power was entirely under the control of the two brothers, he could not suppress his envy and rivalry. By lauding the interest and sympathy shown to the Emperor by his new associates, he gained his point, and stirred up dissensions between him and the Barha Saiyids. According to common report, it was he who was the prime mover in recommending the destruction of the old hereditary nobles, and also of overthrowing the family of Asafu-d daula. The two brothers were not inclined to bear patiently Mir Jumla's invidious and provoking interference in their affairs, and every day they overstepped the bounds of subordination and duty.<sup>2</sup>

As the result of his own weakness and follies, which will be described in a subsequent section, Farrukh-siyar was deposed, imprisoned, blinded, and ultimately killed in a very ignominious manner. On the 28th February 1719, the un-

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1. "Farrukh-siyar would have committed no exceptional crime by dismissing, or even killing the Sayyids . . . he might have left his powerful ministers to pursue peacefully their own way, contenting himself with the name, while they kept the reality of power. Instead of this, he was for ever betting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would.' For seven years the State was in a condition of unstable equilibrium, and it is not too much to say that Farrukh-siyar prepared for himself the fate which finally overtook him. Feeble, false, cowardly, contemptible, it is impossible either to admire or regret him."—*Ibid.*, p. 396.

2. E. & D., op. cit., VII, pp. 442-43.

fortunate Emperor was hiding in some corner or closet of his palace. The hostile nobles met and declared for his deposition on the ground that Farrukh-siyar had 'forfeited all right to the throne by his want of discretion and his promotion of low fellows.'<sup>1</sup> The lot for a successor fell on Prince Bidar Dil, son of Bidar Bakht, grandson of Aurangzeb, 'who was known as having the best understanding among all the Princes.' A riot had already broken out outside the palace. The nobles were in a desperate hurry. The women in the royal apartments, fearing the wholesale massacre of all the Princes, barred the doors and hid them. The entrance was forced and the nominated Prince was called for, but his mother wept and wailed. The blind search ended in catching hold of Rafiū-d Darajāt, son of Rafiū-sh Shān, son of Bahādur Shāh. This youth was brought as he had been found, wearing his ordinary clothes. They put him on the gorgeous Peacock Throne, and went through the usual ceremonial.

Having accomplished this they next turned to Farrukh-siyar. The door of the small room in the ladies' apartments, where he was hiding, was broken open in the midst of feminine wails. "His mother, his wife, his daughter and other ladies grouped themselves around him and tried to shelter him. The shrieking women were pushed on one side with scant ceremony. The men surrounded him and hemmed him in; they then laid hold of him by the hand and neck, his turban fell off, and with every mark of indignity he was dragged and pushed from his retreat.... It was pitiful to see this strong man, perhaps the handsomest and most powerfully built of Bābar's race that had ever occupied the throne, dragged bare-

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1. "There is a local tradition among the Sayyids of Barha that some one proposed to set aside the imperial house altogether, the throne being transferred to one of the two brothers (Sayyid).... Probably the difficulty, an insurmountable one as it proved, was to decide which brother should reign, neither being ready to give way to the other"—Irvine, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

headed and barefooted, subjected at every moment to blows and the vilest abuse."<sup>1</sup> The end of this tragedy may be briefly told. It was not unlike Jahāndar Shāh's; in some respects it was worse. He was blinded, and starved in prison. For four or five days he was even deprived of water for the most necessary purposes. Then finally, Hashim Ali Khān Dakhini whispered to Husain Ali Khān Barha: "I salute your lordship! Disease is dealt with in one of two ways: you either bear it, or remove the afflicted part. But once you have resorted to treatment, there is no hope of recovery till the offending principle is expelled." The hint was accepted. Slow poison was at first administered to Farrukh-siyar, but it had little effect. The patience of the Saiyids being at an end, they sent executioners into the prison to strangle their victim. "In spite of violent resistance, these men effected their purpose, beating the ex-Emperor on the hands till he let go the strap that they had tied round his neck. To make sure, he was stabbed several times in the abdomen. This happened on the night between the 8th and 9th *Jamadi* II. 1131 H. (27th-28th April, 1719)."<sup>2</sup>

'The troublous reign of the late Farrukh-siyar the *Shahid* (martyr!), records Khāfi Khān, 'lasted for 6 years and 4 months, without counting the 11 months of the reign of Jahāndar, which were reckoned as part of his reign, and so entered in the royal records.'<sup>3</sup>

The *post mortem* sympathy of the crowd for this *Shahid* is inexplicable. "When the body was brought to the Akbarā-bādī mosque, it was received by 15,000 to 20,000 men from the camp and bazars. After recital of the prayers over the dead, Abdul-ghafur lifted the corpse and carried it out, to the accompaniment of weeping and wailing from the crowd. As the procession passed, lamentations arose from every roof

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1. Ibid., pp. 389-90.

2. Ibid., p. 392.

3. E. & D., op. cit., VII, p. 478.

and door. Men and women, old and young, rich and poor, shed tears for the departed Emperor and cursed his oppressors. The streets and lanes were rendered impassable by the crowds. The rabble and the mendicants, who had received alms from Farrukh-siyar, followed his bier, rending their garments and throwing ashes on their heads, and as it passed, the women on the roofs raised their cry of mourning, and flung stones and bricks upon the servants and officers of the Sayyids. The body was deposited in the crypt of Humāyūn's tomb.... The bread and the copper coins, brought for distribution to the poor, were rejected by the crowd with scorn; and on the third day, the rabble and professional beggars assembled on the platform where the body had been washed, and then cooked and distributed a large quantity of food, and until day dawned sang funeral laments." (Khāfi Khān, 820; Kamwar Khān, 200; Qāsim, 260).

Not content with this, "For many a day, no beggar deigned to appeal for charity to any passing noble who had been concerned in Farrukh-siyar's death. Zafar Khān's liberal gifts of bread and sweet-meats were far famed; but, these too, were refused. The beggars said that in their mouths was still the flavour of the kindness bestowed by the martyred Emperor, adding, 'May he be poisoned who takes a morsel bearing upon it the mark of those men.' They made collections from artisans and shop-keepers, and distributed alms of food every Thursday<sup>1</sup> at Humāyūn's tomb. If any great noble passed along the roads or through the bazars, they pursued him with shouts and harsh reproaches. Especially was this the case with Mahārājah Ajit Singh<sup>2</sup> and his followers so that they were forced to reach *darbār* by the most out-of-the-way

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1. Farrukh-siyar had changed the names of Wednesday and Thursday respectively to *Humāyūn Shamba* and *Mubarik Shamba*, meaning Auspicious Day and Fortunate Day.

2. Ajit Singh's daughter was married to Farrukh-siyar; yet he connived at his deposition. This widowed daughter was recovered from the Imperial *harem* on 16th July, 1719. She had entered it on 27th Sept., 1715.



routes. The Rajputs raged inwardly, and fiercely laid hand on sword or dagger. But who can fight a whole people? At length, several spoon-sellers and bazār touts having been killed by the Rāthors, the habit of abusing them was abandoned. (Qāsim, 262)"<sup>1</sup>

From the deposition of Farrukh-siyar (28th February 1719) to the accession of a Muhammad Shāh (24th September 1719), three Princes on the throne. were raised to the throne, like bubbles of water rising to the surface, only to end their ephemeral existence in a very short time. Their meteoric 'reigns' may be very briefly noticed.

i. *Rafiu-d Darajāt* :—'After the poor injured Emperor had been set aside, the same confusion and trouble prevailed, both inside and outside the palace. On the 9th *Rabiu-l ākhir*, 1131 A.H., (18th February 1719) Shamsuddin Abul Barakāt Rafiu-d Darajāt, younger son of Rafiu-sh Shāh, and grandson of Bahādur Shāh, the eldest (?) son of Aurangzeb, was made Emperor. He was twenty years of age when he was brought out of confinement, and the noise and confusion was so great and general, that there was not time even to send him to bath, or change his clothes. In the same garments he was wearing, with only a pearl necklace thrown upon his neck for ornament, he was placed upon the throne. His accession and general amnesty were proclaimed to stay the tumult. *Kutubu-l Mulk* Saiyid Abdullah, after offering his congratulations, placed his partisans and faithful servants inside the fortress. Over the doors of the public and private council chambers, and in every place, he stationed men of his own party. The eunuchs, the personal attendants, and all the servants of any importance, were men of his own.

'In the council of the first day, in accordance with the desire of Rāja Ajit Singh, and of the bigoted Rāja Ratan Chand an order was passed for the abolition of the *jizya*, and assurances of security and protection were circulated all over the country. I'tikad Khān was sent to prison with every mark of ignominy; his *jāgīr* was taken away, and his house was seized. Notwithstanding it had been disturbed, it was found to be full of jewels, cash, gold, objects of art, and vessels of silver; and an investigation was ordered for

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1. Irvine, op. cit., pp. 393-94.

the discovery and recovery of the jewels and pearls he had received as presents.....Itimādu-d daula Amin Khān was confirmed as *Bakhshi*. The *subādāri* of Patna was given to Nizāmu-l Mulk Bahādūr Fatha Jang.....Khāfi Khān, from whom the above narrative is taken, also observes, 'The brotherly love which had existed between the two (Saiyid) brothers now turned to hatred and to jealousy of each other's power.....(and) there were contentions between the brothers.' In the meanwhile, 'The Emperor Rafiu-d Darajāt was suffering from consumption (*dikk*). The physicians, under the orders of the Saiyids, did all they could to cure him, but without success. *This monarch had not the slightest control in matters of government*<sup>1</sup>....Sorrow increased his illness, and he became so helpless that the two brothers considered as to which of the imprisoned princes should be named successor. Rafiu-d Darajāt said that if, in his lifetime, the *khutba* were read, and coins struck in the name of his elder brother, Rafiu-d Daula, it would be a great kindness, and very acceptable to him. The Saiyids consented. Three days after Rafiu-d Daula ascended the throne, Rafiu-d Darajāt died. He had reigned *six months and ten days*.<sup>2</sup>

ii. *Nikū-siyar*.—Before proceeding to Rafiu-d Darajāt's real successor, Rafiu-d Daulat, we must deal with this second Prince

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1. "Until this time, the Emperors, however much they might leave State affairs in the hands of a minister or favourite, retained complete control over their own palace and person, and no man could be prevented from access to them. Ultimate power resided in their hands, and they could at any time transfer authority from one minister to another, in this reign all this was changed...even....the Emperor's meals were not served without the express order of his tutor, Himmat Khān, a Barha Sayyid. The young Emperor was allowed little liberty, and in his short reign he seldom left the palace."—Irvine, op. cit., p. 416.

2. E. & D., op. cit., VII, pp. 479-82. Rafiu-d Darajāt was deposed and sent back to the *harem* on 4th June 1719. Two days afterwards, on 6th June, his brother was seated on the throne. Darajāt's death occurred on 11th June, 1719. (Warid 159 a).—Irvine, op. cit., p. 418. Two instances are quoted by Irvine to indicate how even this feeble Prince tried to assert his imperial dignity. (1) Husain Ali once had the temerity to sit down before the Emperor, breaking a time-honoured etiquette. The Emperor stretching his feet towards Husain Ali Khān, at once asked him to pull off his socks, 'Although inwardly raging, H. A. K. could do nothing else but comply.' (2) The *vazir* brought on successive days two warrants for the emperor's signature, posting two different persons to an identical office in an identical village. The Emperor asked: "Is it the same village, or another with the same name?" When he was told it was the same, he threw down the paper saying it was foolish to act like that. Ibid., p. 417.

who was simultaneously set up by the rebellious army at Agra, under the leadership of Mitr Sen, a Nāgar Brahman, with the connivance of Raja Jai Singh (Sawai) of Amber. 'On the 9th *Jumada-l-akhir*, 1131,' writes Khāfi Khān, 'the soldiers at Agra brought out of confinement in the fort, and raised to the sovereignty, a person named Nikū-siyar, a son of Prince Muhammad Akbar, and grandson of Aurangzeb. His accession was announced by peals of cannon, and coins of gold and silver were struck in his name.'<sup>1</sup>

The rebellious Prince—or rather rival Emperor—called upon the Saiyids to 'make due submission, wrapping the head of shame in the skirt of humbleness,' promising, 'No revenge will be taken, but all their rank and dignities will be maintained as before.' But Husain Ali Khān proudly answered: 'If Agra were a fort of steel set in an encircling ocean, he would with one blow from his finger strike it down, so that beyond a little mud and dust, no sign of it should be left on earth.' Nevertheless, the suppression of Nikū-siyar proved a more arduous task than was imagined. Shaista Khān, a maternal uncle of Farrukh-siyar, also raised the standard of revolt at Delhi. Finally, however, the rebels were starved into submission at the end of a long siege (12th August, 1719). Nikū-siyar had become so effeminate that, forgetful of all Imperial decorum, he began to beg and pray for his life 'in the dialect used by women.' He was sent to Salimgarh, together with other captive Princes; and he died there on 11th March 1723. Mitr Sen escaped vengeance by committing suicide before capture.

Vast treasures fell into the hands of the victors. "In one place thirty-five *lakhs* of *tanka* minted in the time of Sikandar Lodi (1488-1516) were recovered; and in another seventy-eight *lakhs* of Shāh Jahān's silver coinage, with ten thousand gold coins of Akbar's reign. The papers of account were also recovered. These showed that the money had been placed by Alamgir in the custody of Shaista Khān, Amīr-ul-umara; but upon that Emperor's death in the Dakhin, no further notice had been taken of these hoards. They were not discovered in Bahādur Shāh's or Jahāndar Shāh's time. In the ward-robe were a shawl studded with jewels which had belonged to Nūr Jahān Begam, a sword used by the Emperor Jahāngir, and the sheet sprinkled with pearls which Shāh Jahān

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1. E. & D., op. cit., VII, p. 482. Nikū-siyar had been in prison 40 years since his confinement during his father's rebellion in Rajputana. Two of his sisters were married to two sons of Bahādur Shāh. The proclamation of Nikū-siyar, according to Irvine, was on 29th *Jumada* (18th May, 1719)—Irvine, loc. cit., pp. 411-12.

caused to be prepared for the tomb of Mumtāz Mahal. One valuation puts the property at 1,80,00,000 Rupees (£ 18,00,000), 1,40,00,000 Rupees in cash and the rest in goods. Khāfi Khān puts it still higher, namely, at two to three *krors* of Rupees (£ 2,000,000 to £ 3,000,000)."<sup>1</sup>

iii. *Rafīu-d Daula*.—‘On the 20th *Rajab*, 1131 A.H. (May 27, 1719 A.D.), Rafīu-d Daula, who was one year and a half older than his brother Rafīu-d Darajāt, was raised to the throne with the title of *Shāh Jahān the Second*. Matters went on just as before, for, excepting that the coins were struck and the *khutba* read in his name, he had no part in the government of the country. He was surrounded by creatures of Kutbu-l Mulk, and, as to going out or staying at home, holding a Court, or choosing his food or raiment, he was under the direction of Himmāt Khān. He was not allowed to go to the mosque on Friday, or to go hunting, or to talk to any of the *amirs*, without the presence of one of the Saiyids or his guardian.’ Perhaps the only outing that the Imperial captive had was in the march against Agra. Khāfi Khān concludes, ‘*Shāh Jahān the second died of dysentery and mental disorder, after a reign of three months and some days.*’ (17th or 18th September, 1719).<sup>2</sup>

One notable event that took place in this reign was the withdrawal of Ajit Singh’s daughter (Farrukh-siyar’s widow) from the Imperial seraglio and her reconversion to Hinduism. Khāfi Khān alludes to this in the following terms :—

‘At this time Mahārāja Ajit Singh took back the Mahārāni, his daughter, who had been married to Farrukh-siyar, with all her jewels and treasure and valuables, amounting to a *kror* of rupees in value. According to report he made her throw off her Musulman dress, dismissed her Muhammadan attendants, and sent her to her native country (Jodhpur) . . . In the reign of no former Emperor had any Rāja been so presumptuous as to take his daughter after she had been married to a king and admitted to the honour of Islām.’<sup>3</sup>

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1. Irvine, op. cit., pp. 427-28.

2. Irvine does not accept the view that these Princes were got rid of by poison or any other means. According to him the Saiyid had nothing to gain by this. The Princes died of their own feeble health and excessive opium-eating.—See *ibid.*, pp. 430-32.

3. E. & D., op. cit., VII, p. 483.

When Rafiud-daula's life was despaired of, Saiyid Abdullah sent for another Prince from Fathpur.

4. Muhammad This was Prince Muhammad Roshan Shāh : 1719-4. Akhtar, son of Jahān Shāh, and grandson of Aurangzeb. He was then only eighteen years of age. Since the death of Jahāndar Shāh, he had lived with his mother, who is described by Khāfi Khān as a noble lady 'well acquainted with State business,' and as 'a woman of much intelligence and tact,'—in the fort of Delhi. 'He was a good-looking young man, with many good qualities, and of excellent intelligence. Rafiud-daula had been dead nearly a week before the young Prince arrived ; but the fact was kept secret, and the defunct was buried soon after the arrival.'<sup>1</sup>

'On the 11th *Zi-l ka'da*, 1131 A.H. (Sept. 1719 A.D.), he reached Fathpur, and on the 15th of that month he ascended the throne. . . . Money was struck in the name of *Abu-l Muzaffar Nasirud-din Muhammad Shāh Bādshāh-i Ghāzi*, and his name was read in the *khutba*, as Emperor of Hindustan, in the mosques. . . . It was settled that the beginning of his reign should date from the deposition of Farukh-siyar, and should be so entered in the Government records. Fifteen thousand rupees a month were allotted to his mother. The *nazirs* and . . . all the officers and servants around the Emperor were, as before, the servants of Saiyid Abdullah. When the young Emperor went out for a ride, he was surrounded, as with a halo, by numbers of the Saiyid's trusted adherents ; and when occasionally, in the course of two or three months, he went out hunting, or for an excursion into the country, they went with him and brought him back.'<sup>2</sup>

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1. "During the few days which elapsed between the death of Rafiud-daula and the arrival of his successor, the *Wazir* and his brother made their usual daily visit to the imperial quarters and returned with robes of honour, as if newly conferred on them, thus deceiving the common people into the belief that the Emperor was still alive."—Irvine, op. cit., II, p. 1,

2. E. & D., op. cit., VII, pp. 485-86.

These impressions of Muhammad Shāh are further amplified by other writers of the period. For instance, Rustam Ali, author of the *Tarikh-i Hindi*,<sup>1</sup> observes, (This Prince was a lover of pleasure and indolence, negligent of political duties, and addicted to loose habits, but of somewhat a generous disposition. He was entirely careless regarding his subjects.) The writer, evidently a partisan of the Saiyid Brothers, adds 'As is well known, this Emperor, so long as *Amīru-l umara* Husain Ali Khān lived, strictly observed, by virtue of the efficient management of that great Saiyid, all the ancient laws and established rules of his ancestors. The achievements of all undertakings, the arrangement of all political affairs, and the execution of all wars were carried on in an excellent manner by the wisdom of that high nobleman. The Emperor decided all disputes without partiality, according to the Muhammadan law; but when some of the nobles, natives of this country and of Turān, overcome by their evil passions, and merely through envy and malice, put that wellwisher of the creatures of God to death, to the mortification of poor people and all good subjects, the Emperor became master of his own will, and, actuated by his youthful passions and folly and pride, resigned himself to frivolous pursuits and the company of wicked and mean characters. This created a spirit of opposition and enmity towards him in those very nobles who, from their malicious disposition, had been the instruments of the death of Husain Ali Khān. The Emperor, on account of the rebellion of the nobles, the fear of his own life, and the temptations of his evil passions, shut up the gate of justice and gave no ear to complaints.... In a short time, many of the officers of this kingdom put out their feet from the path of obedience to the sovereign, and many of the infidels, rebels, tyrants and enemies stretched out the hands of rapacity and extortion upon the weaker tributaries and the poor subjects.'

The brighter side of the picture is drawn by Ghulam Husain, author of the *Siyar-ul-mutakherin*: 'The steps of that sublime place (the throne)', he says, 'were dignified by his accession, and silver and gold coin, distributed on the occasion (of his accession), acquired additional value from the honour of his name. He as-

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1. This work was composed in the year 1154 A.H. (1741-42 A.D.). The author expressly states his object in writing to have been—'While it might prove a lesson to the wise, it would not fail to draw the attention of intelligent readers to the instability of all earthly pleasures, and the short duration of human life, and so induce them to withdraw their affections from this world.'—*Ibid.*, VII, pp. 40-43.

sumed the auspicious title of *Abdul fateh, Nasir-ed din, Mahomed-shah* (the Lord or father of victory, the champion of the faith, the king Mahomed). From that moment provisions, which had risen to an immoderate price, became cheaper, and once more plenty showed her face in every market. . . . The three preceding reigns had been so short as to serve only to confound history; it was commanded, therefore, that the seven or eight months which had elapsed under the short-lived reigns of those three princes should be omitted entirely, and that they should be comprehended within that of Mahomedshāh's reign, which was thus made to commence immediately on Ferokhsiar's demise.' Speaking of the restraints of the Saiyids, Ghulam Husain writes, 'All this was patiently submitted to by the young emperor, who, *sensible of the delicacy of his situation, made no opposition to the vezir's pleasure, and, had the good sense to shew him every mark of deference and regard.*' Yet the writer does not fail to observe, '*This did not effect the least abatement of the jealousy with which he was watched; for whenever he went abroad, which happened once or twice a month, for the purpose of taking an airing, the king was encircled by a body of Seids, who did not lose sight of him a moment, nor ever carry him farther than the seats and gardens in the suburbs, which at most are one or two coss from the palace, and they always came back before the dusk of the evening.*'<sup>1</sup>

According to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, though Muhammad Shāh was 'a mere cypher in respect of his public duties, there were some redeeming traits in his private character. Naturally timid and wavering, he was also free from insolent pride, caprice and love of wanton cruelty. . . . 'He never gave his consent to shedding blood or doing harm to God's creatures. In his reign the people passed their lives in ease, and the empire outwardly retained its dignity and prestige. The

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1. *Siyar-ul mutakherin*, pp. 150-32 (Briggs).

M. Muhsin Sadiki, in his *Jauhar-i Samsam*, writes: The Emperor Muhammad Shāh never came out of the citadel except to enjoy the pleasures of an excursion or to amuse himself in field sports. He paid no attention to the administration of the kingdom, which lacked all supreme authority, and through his indolence, unrelieved by any exertion, he fell and came to an end. For water even, notwithstanding its innate purity and excellence, if it remains stagnant anywhere, changes its colour and smell.—E. & D., op. cit., VIII, p. 73.

foundations of the *Delhi monarchy* were really rotten but *Muhammad Shāh* by his cleverness kept them standing. He may be called the last of the rulers of *Bābur's line*, as after him the kingship had nothing but the name left to it." [Siyar, iii, 25]<sup>1</sup>

Muhammad Shāh is certainly memorable as the last Mughal Emperor who sat on the *Peacock Throne* of Shāh Jahān. "Students of history will note his reign," observes Keene, "as the period in which were founded all the modern powers of the Indian peninsula. It seemed as though the empire, like some of the lower animals, was about to reproduce its life by fissiparous generation." "Mohamad Shāh was a typical Taimuride element—easy going, personally brave, but morally irresolute." A Mughal friend said of him, that his soul was like the waters of a lake, easily agitated by a passing storm, but settling at once as soon as the disturbance was over. The curse of Reuben!"<sup>2</sup>

Nine years after Nādir Shāh's invasion, as the result of the shock he received from the death of his *wazīr*, Kamrudin Khān, Muhammad Shāh died on the 15th April 1748.<sup>3</sup>

Before we proceed to Ahmad Shāh, Muhammad's son and successor, we should briefly notice the attempt made by Saiyid Abdullah Khān Barha to set up another rival on the throne. This was Muhammad Ibrāhīm, third son of Bahādur Shāh's eldest son Rafiush Shān. He was about twenty-three years of age at the time he was sent for (1720) to contend for the crown against Muhammad Shāh. Muhammad Shāh had hardly been a year on the throne, when differences arose between him and the Saiyids. The details of these strained

1. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, 1, pp. 9-10.

2. Keene, *The Turks in India*, pp. 200, 200-201, 221.

3. For details see *Tarikh-i Ahmed Shāh*, E. & D., op. cit., VIII, p. 111. This was the thirty-first year of his reign, and he was forty-nine years old.—Ibid., p. 112 and n.



relations will be described in a later section. Suffice it here to note that Saiyid Husain Ali Khān Barha was murdered on 8th October 1720, and the news of it reached his elder brother only eighteen hours later. Though Abdullah Khān moved cautiously in the matter, he made up his mind to replace Muhammad Shāh, if possible, by another Prince.

A search was accordingly made in the royal apartments. But, as had happened on a previous occasion, 'The young men had the door shut against the envoys. . . . ; but after a good deal of pressing, they admitted them and asked the reason of their coming ; and when they were informed of it, they gave a sharp answer, flatly refusing. It is reported that after the envoys returned unsuccessful, they went to Neku-siyar, and received the same answer. Next they went to Sultan Ibrāhīm, son of Rafiū-sh Shān, and urged him to accept the proposition, *saying that his acceptance would save the lives of the party of the Saiyids*. After some conversation he consented.

'On the 9th (?) *Zi-l hijja*, 1132 (15th Oct. 1720), Sultan Muhammad Ibrāhīm was raised to the throne with the title of Abu-l Fath Zahiru-d din Muhammad Ibrāhīm.<sup>1</sup> Two days afterwards Sayid Abdullah arrived and paid his homage. He received the title of *Ghāziū-d Ghalid Jang*, the position of *Amīru-l umara* with the duties of *Mir-bakhshi*, and a *mansab* of 8000. . . . . A number of courtiers of the time of Rafiū-d Darajāt, who were in confinement, or had no *mansabs*, or despaired of promotion, were sent for and received *mansabs* and sums of money for their expenses. They were directed to enlist horsemen at the rate of eighty rupees per month for each man, and a sum of 30 or 40 thousand rupees was advanced for the purpose. . . . I'tikād Khān and. . . other nobles of Farrukh-siyar's days all received favours, and had expectations held out to them. . . . On the 17th (?) *Zi-l hijja* Saiyid Abdullah came out of Delhi with Sultan Ibrāhīm and went

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1. See Irvine, *op. cit.*, II, p. 76. Ibrāhīm had been designated to succeed Refiū-d Daula. But "Saiyid Khān Jahān, *subah-dār* of Delhi, with whom the final choice rested, dreading Ibrāhīm's reputation for violent temper, had substituted Roshan Akhtar, now became Muhammad Shāh."

to the *I'd-gah*. Here he was joined by Ghulam Ali Khān from the royal army, by Tahawwur Khān from Agra, and by others.....

'Intelligence arrived that the Emperor Muhammad Shāh, being freed from all trouble about Husain Ali Khān, was marching to the capital by the Rajput road.... A very extraordinary fact was that, notwithstanding the large outlay of money, the royal domestics and officials in the train of Sultan Ibrāhīm rode horses with no saddles..... On the 10th *Muharram*, 1133 (1st Nov. 1720), as the author has ascertained from the *Bakhshi*, and as he heard from the mouth of Saiyid Abdullah Khān, more than 90,000 horsemen had been entered in the lists. Of these 14 or 15 thousand perhaps were recruits, who rode ponies (*yabu*); some of the old soldiers were dispersed about the vicinity, and the remainder were present. Afterwards there were the followers of the traitor Churāman, of Muhkam Singh, and sundry other of the adherents of Husain Ali Khān, and the *zamindārs* of the neighbourhood. According to report, the number exceeded 100,000 horse. All around as far as the eye could reach the earth seemed covered with horsemen. (But the army was ill-paid.) . . .

'On the 19th *Muharram* the royal army encamped at Shāhpur<sup>1</sup> . . . The army was not half as numerous as that of the enemy (but better paid)..... On the 12 *Muharram* Abdullah Khān's forces encamped at Husainpur,<sup>2</sup> three *kos* from the Imperial army, and made arrangements for battle. But there were such contentions among the officers, who were unwilling to serve under the orders of each other, that a proper disposition with right and left wings could not be made. Each chief raised his standard where he chose, and would not consent to obey any other . . . (Details of battle) . . . Saiyid Abdullah received a sword-cut on his hand and a flesh wound from an arrow in the forehead, when Haidar Kuli and his companions, sword in hand, charged upon him. Saiyid Abdullah, exclaiming that he was a *Saiyid* called for quarter, and Haidar Kuli mercifully made him prisoner . . . The shouts of victory rose high from the army of Muhammad Shāh, and Haidar Kuli brought his prisoner on an elephant to the presence of Muhammad Shāh, who showed the clemency of the race of Timūr, spared his life, and placed him under the charge of Haidar Kuli Khān . . . . The innocent Sultan Muhammad Ibrāhīm had sought refuge in the jungle, but he was made prisoner, and brought before the

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1 & 2. Both places are on the right bank of the Jamuna, in *pargana* Palwal. The battle was fought from 12th-14th Nov. 1720. —*Ibid.*, pp. 82-93.

Emperor ; but *as he had not choice in what he had done*, he received the royal pardon.<sup>1</sup>

"The night when he reached the Presence, Muhammad Shāh embraced him, asking : 'How have you come?' The Prince answered : 'By the way you came.' His Majesty said : 'Who brought you?' He replied : 'The person who brought you'<sup>2</sup>. . . . An allowance of forty Rupees a day was fixed for Ibrāhīm's maintenance, and he was sent back to prison in the citadel of Shāh-jahānābād. There he died on the 8th *Muharram* 1159 H. (January 30th, 1746) at the estimated age of fifty years. As a quatrain quoted by Khush-hal Chand says, his day of power had been short-lived, "*like a drop of dew upon a blade of grass*."<sup>3</sup>

Ahmad Shāh was the only son of his father Muhammad Shāh. 'He gave himself up to useless pursuits, to pleasure and enjoyment,' says the *Tarikh-i Alamgīr Sāni*, 'and his reign was brought to an end (after 6 yrs., 3 months, and 9 days) by the enmity which he showed to Nizāmu-l Mulk Asaf Jāh (Ghāziu-d din Khān), at the instigation of his *wazīr* the Khān-khānan and his mother Udham Bai.'<sup>4</sup> Greater details are afforded by the *Tarikh-i Ahmad Shāh* ; 'When the Prince succeeded his father on the throne of Delhi, he took the title of *Mujahidu-d din Ahmad Shāh Ghāzī*, and in the prayers and on the coins these titles were adopted, and to his deceased parent he gave the title of *Hazrat Firdaus Aramgah*.

'Ahmād Shāh was not a man of great intellect ; all the period of his youth till manhood had been spent in the *harem*, and he had absolutely no experience whatever of the affairs of a kingdom, or of the cares of government.'<sup>6</sup> Besides this,

1. Khāfi Khān, E. & D., op. cit., VII, pp. 509-15.

2. The allusion being that both of them had been set on the throne by Abdullah Khān.

3. Irvine, op. cit., II, p. 94.

4. Ibid., p. 140.

5. The same writer has earlier stated that Muhammad Shāh locked up his son, Ahmad Shāh, in one part of the citadel, not wishing him to appear in public. He kept him in the greatest indigence, and would not allow him to indulge in the game of *chaugan*, hunting, shooting, or any royal sports, such as he practised himself.—Ibid., p. 105.

he was surrounded by all kinds of youthful pleasures, which every person, seeing the turn of his mind, was anxious to display before him to entice his fancy. As a natural consequence, he gave himself up entirely to pastimes and sports, and bestowed no thought on the weighty affairs of the kingdom. *To manage a country and wield a sceptre is a matter full of difficulty, and until an Emperor understands thoroughly himself the good and bad tendency of every measure, he cannot be fit for a rule.* For this reason Ahmad Shāh was unable to govern the empire entrusted to him.'

To make matters worse, 'Jawed Khān, the head eunuch, who in the time of Muhammad Shāh had the entire management of the *harem*, and had the *entrée* to the women's apartments, and although 50 years old, could neither read nor write, but being constantly in the presence of the Emperor, had represented himself as being well up to business and an intelligent man, prevailed on the simple-minded youth of an Emperor to appoint him *darogha* of the *Diwān-i Khās*, with a *mansab* of 6000, thus exalting him far above his equals....  
 .... The Emperor gave over the entire management of the country to him. The Nawāb, who had in the days of the former sovereign carried on a secret intimacy with Ahmad Shāh's mother, *who was originally a dancing girl*,<sup>1</sup> now openly governed the realm in concert with her, and contrary to the custom of all *harems*, where no male domestics are allowed at night, he always remained in the women's apartments all night, and in the day used to converse with low characters, such as *khānasāmās*, and did not look on the nobles.'

The Emperor's mother, Udham Bai, fully merited the aspersions.<sup>2</sup> She had fallen out of favour even during her husband's life-

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1. "A Hindu *danseuse* ... who is known in history as the Kudsia Begam. The remains of her villa are to be seen in a garden still bearing her name, on the Jamuna side, a little beyond Kashmir Gate of New Delhi."—Keene, *The fall of the Mughal Empire*, p. 28.

2. Matters reached such a pass that the royal guards being exasperated by their salaries remaining unpaid for over a year,

time. But when her son ascended the throne, 'her star of prosperity daily increased, till at last she surpassed all the Begams. She was at first called Bai Jiu Sāhibā, afterwards "the Parent of the Pure, the Lady of the Age, Sāhib Ji Sāhibā, on whom be peace!" Then she was called Hazrat, afterwards Kibla-i' Alam, in addition to the former titles held in the deceased Emperor's time, and although she had already a *mansab* of 50,000, yet, owing to the intimacy she kept up with the Nawāb, she managed to have the rule of the whole empire. Notwithstanding the lowness of her origin, and the very humble position which she had till lately held, the fruits of her generosity and magnanimity soon became known and lauded ... Having called together the families of her children and grandchildren, she distributed to them large presents of money, and fixed monthly salaries for their maintenance. *In short, the Queen and the Nawab took the whole government into their own hands, and the Emperor had nothing left but the empty title.*'<sup>1</sup>

'The Emperor considered it to be most suitable to him to spend his time in pleasure; and he made the *zanānā* extend a mile. For weeks together he would remain without seeing the face of a male creature. There was probably no sincere friend to raise a warning; and the doom deepened and the hand wrote upon the wall unheeded<sup>2</sup>. ... The cabinet of the

at last staged a scene. "They tied up a young ass and a bitch at the palace gate and when the nobles and other courtiers went to attend the *darbār*, they audaciously urged them, saying, 'First make your bow to these. This one (pointing to the ass) in the Nawāb Bahādur, and that (the bitch) is Hazrat Qudsia, the Queen-mother."—Sarkar, op. cit., pp. 335-36.

1. Ibid., pp. 112-14; see Sarkar, op. cit., pp. 388-40.

2. 'The administration had grown very weak and degraded; the pillars of the State were daily shaken; the Emperor never inquired about the realm, the soldiery, or the treasury,—the three foundations of an empire. ... He became so absorbed in pleasure that a whole *kos* (an area of four sq. miles) was turned into a women's preserve by excluding all males from it, and there the Emperor used to desport himself in female company for a week or a month in bower and park.' (*Tarikh-i Ahmad Shāh and Siyar*). Sarkar, op. cit., pp. 329-30.

The imbecile Emperor indulged in all kinds of peurile follies, e.g. he nominated children of three years and less as *subādārs* of the Punjab and Kashmir, at a time when they were threatened with the invasion of Ahmad Shāh Abdālī. He held mock courts

Empress was now . . . in the position of a necromancer who has to furnish his familiars with employment on pain of their destroying him.<sup>1</sup> The events of this reign will be narrated elsewhere. The end of it was a piece with the character of the Emperor here described. When Ghāziu-d din set himself up as the *wazir* (5th June, 1754), he convened the Mughal Darbār, "from which, with his usual address, he contrived to obtain as a vote of the cabinet what was doubtless the suggestion of his own unprincipled ambition. 'This Emperor,' said the assembled nobles, 'has shown his unfitness for rule. He is unable to cope with the Mahrāttas: he is false and fickle towards his friends. Let him be deposed and a worthier son of Timūr raised to the throne.' This resolution was immediately acted upon; the unfortunate monarch was blinded and consigned to the State prison of Salimgarh, adjoining the palace; and a son of Jahāndar Shāh, the competitor of Farokhsiar, proclaimed Emperor under the sounding title of Alamgīr II, July, 1754 A.D."<sup>2</sup>

Muhammad Ali Khān relates how 'they waited upon the royal princes who were in confinement, to

7. Alamgīr II, 1754-59. select one to ascend the throne'. But the

princes were afraid, and no one consented.

At length after much trouble, Sultan Azizu-d din, son of Jahāndar Shāh, son of Bahādur Shāh, who during his seclusion

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for them with all the paraphernalia and ceremonial. During the last 2 or 3 years of his reign, he made up his mind to devote 6 hrs. every day seriously to State business. But during the remaining 18 hrs. of the day he would be so absorbed in his pleasures that he would never distract himself for even the most urgent affairs of State.—See *ibid.*, pp. 330-33.

1. Keene, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-4; cf. E. & D., *op. cit.*, VIII, pp. 140-41. Ahmad Shāh died a natural death in the prison, in 1775, at the age of fifty. See also Sarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 541-44.

The *Tārīkh-i Muzaffarī* relates how both the ex-Emperor and his mother were blinded ten days after the accession of Alamgīr II, and treated then with indignities 'which it is unfit to write.'—E. & D., *op. cit.*, VIII, pp. 323-24.

had devoted himself to theological science, was prevailed upon to accept the crown, with the title of *Azizu-d din Muhammad Alamgīr Sāni* (II), on the 10th *Shā'ban*, 1167 A.H. Ghāzīu-din Khān Imādu-l Mulk was made *wazīr*.<sup>1</sup>

This Prince met his death sooner than his predecessors, under political circumstances that will be related hereafter. His chief adviser, Intizāmu-d daula Khān-khānan, was murdered 'in the very act of his prayers'. Alamgīr II was something of a religious character. With this bait he was entitled to his doom. It was reported to him that 'a most saintly *derwesh* from Kandahar had arrived in the city, who was lodged in the *kotila* of Fīroz Shāh, and that he was well worth seeing. The Emperor, who was very fond of visiting *fakirs*, and particularly such an one as had come from the country of Ahmad Shāh (Abdālī), became extremely desirous of seeing him, and went to him almost unattended. When he reached the appointed place, he stopped at the door of the chamber where his assassins were concealed, and Madhi Ali Khān relieved him of the sword which he had in his hand, and put it by. As he entered the house the curtains were down and fastened to the ground. Mīrza Bābar, . . . . son-in-law of the Emperor, beginning to suspect foul play, drew his sword and wounded several of the conspirators. Upon this the myrmidons of Imādu-l Mulk surrounded him and took him prisoner; and having taken the sword from him, placed him in a *palankin*, and sent him back to the royal prison. Some evil-minded Mughals were expecting the Emperor in the chamber, and when they found him there unattended and alone, they jumped up, and inflicting on him repeated wounds with their daggers, brought him to the ground, and then threw his body out of the window, stripped off all the clothes and left the corpse stark naked. After lying on the ground for eighteen hours, his body was taken up by order of Mahdi Ali Khān, and buried in the sepulchre of the Emperor Humāyūn. This tragedy occurred on Thursday, the 20th of *Rabīu-s sani*, 1173 A.H. (30th November 1759). On the same day a youth named Muhiu-l Millat, son of Muhiu-s Sunnat, son of Kām Bakhsh, was raised to the throne with the title of Shāh Jahān II<sup>2</sup>. . . . . In the meantime, the report of Ahmad Shāh Durrāni's invasion spread among the people.'

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1. Ibid., p. 323.

2. Cf. p. 710. Alamgīr II was 56 years of age at the time of his accession. He reigned 5 years, 7 months and 8 days, and had five sons, the eldest of whom was 28 yrs. old.—E. & D., op. cit., VIII, pp. 142-43.

When the news of his father's death reached him this Prince was at Patna. Hearing of the murder 'he was much afflicted in his mind ; but ascribing the event to the wise dispensations of Providence, he sat upon the throne of sovereignty on the 5th of *Jumada-l-awwal*. Nawāb Shuja'u-d daula, after a few days, came to the border of his territories, and having invited the Emperor from Azīmābād (Patna), obtained the honour of an interview, and was exalted to the hereditary office of *Wazir*, and afterwards accompanied him to Allahabad. It is through the means of that great man that the name of Sahib Kiran Gurgan (Timur) still remains ; otherwise, the Abdālī would not have allowed one of his descendants to survive', writes Muhammad Aslam, in the *Farthatu-n Nazirin*.<sup>1</sup>

The history of Shāh Alam II and his successors down to the deposition of the 'last of the Mughal Emperors' need not be pursued here. From what has been written it must be plain to the reader that the *Mughal Empire* had by now ceased to exist. 'When twenty years had elapsed of the reign of Shāh Alam,' writes Kudratu-llah in his *Jam-i Jahan-numa*, 'in every corner of the Kingdom people aspired to exercise independence. Allahabad, Oudh, Etawah, Shukohabad, and the whole country of the Afghans (Rohillas) are in the possession of the Nawāb Wazir Asafu-d daula, and the whole country of Bengal has been subjected by the strong arm of the Feringis. The country of the Jāts is under Najaf Khān, and the Dakhin is partly under Nizam Ali Khān, partly under the Mahrāttas, and partly under Haidar Naik and Muhammad Ali Khān Sirāju-d daula of Gopamau. The Sikhs hold the whole *suba* of the Punjab, and Lahore and Multan ; and Jainagar and other places are held by Zabita Khān. In this manner other *zamindārs* have established themselves here and there. All the world is waiting in anxious expectation of the appearance of Imām Mahdī, who is to come in the latter days. Shāh Alam

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1. E & D., op. cit., VIII, pp. 172-73.  
M. E. 3.



sits in the palace of Delhi, and has no thought beyond the gratification of his own pleasure, while his people are deeply sorrowful and grievously oppressed even unto death.<sup>1</sup>

## II. THE BROTHERS KING-MAKERS

The history of nearly ten years from the accession of Farrukh-siyar (1712) to the discomfiture of Prince Sultan Muhammad (1720) is very largely the biography of the *Saiyid Brothers*, as the 'King-makers' Abdullah Khān and Husain Ali Khān Barha are familiarly known in history. They first acquired importance during Farrukh-siyar's contest for the throne. They claimed descent from Abu-l farah, a Saiyid adventurer from Wasit in Mesopotamia, who had settled near Patiala centuries earlier. "The etymology of the name *Barha*," says Irvine, "is disputed; perhaps it is from the word *bāra* (twelve), with some allusion to the number of their villages. (There seems to be no town or village in the Saiyid's country, or connected with them, bearing the name of Barha)."<sup>2</sup> As already pointed out, the father of the Saiyid brothers was successively the *subāhdār* of Bijapur and Ajmer. Saiyid Miyan (Abdullah Khān) as he was called "had risen in the service of Ruhullah Khān, Alamgīr's *Mir Bakhshi*, and finally, on receiving an imperial *mansab*, attached himself to the eldest Prince Muhammad Muazzam Shāh Alam." Hasan Ali Khān (presently Abdullah Khān Kutb-l Mulk), the elder of the two brothers, was forty-six years, and Husain Ali Khān, the younger, forty-four years of age at the time of their emergence from comparative obscurity. In 1697-8 Hasan Ali was *faujdār* in Khāndesh and later at Aurangabad. Husain held a similar post in the *subāhs* of Ajmer and Agra. During the battle of Jājau (18th June, 1707) they held the rank of 3,000 and 2,000, and fought in the vanguard of Shāh Alam's army. As a reward

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1. Ibid., VII., pp. 184-85.

2. Irvine, op. cit., I, p. 202 and ft. n.

for their services their status was raised to 4000, and the title of Abdullah Khān was conferred on the elder Saiyid. But they were dissatisfied. When Prince Jahāndar met them the morning after Jājau, Husain Ali Khān is reported to have said that what they had done was nothing, many had done as much, but that *(their valour would be known when their lord was deserted and alone, and the strength of their right arm had seated him on the throne.)* This proud prophecy was fulfilled in favour of Farrukh-siyar, five years later, and to the destruction of the Prince to whom it was expressed, viz. Jahāndar Shāh.

By the favour of Prince Azīmu-sh Shān, in 1711, Saiyid Abdullah Khān was made his deputy in the province of Allahabad. Three years earlier (1708), Husain Ali had been appointed to the government of Bihar by the same Prince. The claim of Farrukh-siyar (Azīmu-sh Shān's son) on the gratitude and support of the Saiyids was great; and, as already noticed, they did not fail him in his contest for the throne (1712). In fact, Farrukh-siyar's success was almost entirely due to them. The result was fateful.

Jahāndar Shāh was dethroned and ignominiously put to death, and Farrukh-siyar was installed in The King-Makers. his place (1712), only to meet with the same fate seven years later (1719). This last was a terrible year for the faineant Emperors: Rafīu-d Darajāt and Rafī-ud Daula were successively raised to the throne; but the hand of death removed them from their captivity,—for the dominance of the Saiyid brothers meant for them nothing less. A third Prince, Muhammad Nikū-siyar made a bid for the throne under other auspices, but inevitably failed (1719); he was sent to Salimgarh (another "Tower of London") to die there in captivity in March, 1723.

Irvine strongly repudiates the charge levelled against the Saiyid brothers of having poisoned the Princes. Foremost among the accusers, he points out, is Kamwar Khān: "but

this man's views on the subject can be readily accounted for. He had risen in the service of Rafi-ush-shan, the father of this (Rafiu-d Daulat) and the previous Emperor, and naturally he expected much personal benefit from their coming to the throne. In this he was entirely disappointed. From fear of the Sayyids, the two Princes had discouraged the applications of their own dependants, such as Kamwar Khān, and by reason of their short-lived tenure of the throne such hopes of preferment were dashed to the ground. Instigated by his sorrow for their early death and by regret at his own vanished prospects, is it to be wondered at that he lost his judgment, and too readily believed that his young masters had been made away with? . . . . . he insists that the attack of diarrhoea from which the young Emperor suffered, was due to the Sayyids' 'cunning devices'. . . . . These vague accusations cannot for a moment be entertained. To refute them it is enough to remember how much the Sayyids were interested in keeping the Prince alive, if they could. They could in no way benefit by such gratuitous iniquity as the poisoning of an inoffensive Prince, with whom they could anticipate no injury."<sup>1</sup>

We have already described how the Saiyid brothers again rose equal to the situation, and managed to secure yet another Prince for the throne. This was Muhammad Shāh, a lad of eighteen summers, good-looking, 'with many good qualities and of excellent intelligence. His mother also was well acquainted with State business, and was a woman of much intelligence and tact'. . . . . Nevertheless 'the *Wazīr* and . . . all the officers and servants around the Emperor were as before, the servants of Saiyid Abdullah. When the young Emperor went out for a ride, he was surrounded with a halo, by numbers of the Saiyid's trusted adherents; and when occasionally, in the course of two or three months he went out hunting, or for an excursion into the country, they went with him and brought him back.' Their minion 'Ratan Chand

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1. Irvine, op. cit., I, pp. 430-32.

held a firm position. His authority extended over all civil, revenue and legal matters, even to the appointment of *Kāzis* in the cities and other judicial officers. All the other government officials were put in the background, and no one would undertake any business but under a document with his seal.<sup>1</sup>

But "laughter ends with weeping, and rejoicing with sorrow."<sup>2</sup> The Saiyid brothers were caught in the diplomatic tangle,—a net, partly at least, of their own making,—whose texture was intrigue and culmination death. Husain Ali was murdered in 1720 at the instigation of the 'King's Friends'; Abdullah Khān sought to avenge his brother's death by raising yet another 'Emperor' to the throne. The story of this misadventure has already been told. Prince Sultan Ibrāhīm's and Abdullah Khān's fate was settled on the battlefield of Hasanpur (or Husepur), 13th-14th November, 1720, Abdullah Khān was captured, and Ibrāhīm, who had fled from the field, was brought back a prisoner."<sup>3</sup>

Saiyid Abdullah Khān Barha remained a prisoner in the citadel of Delhi, under the charge of Haidar Kuli Khān, for another two years. He was "treated with respect, receiving delicate food to eat and fine clothes to wear. But so long as he survived the Mughals remained uneasy, not knowing what sudden change of fortune might happen. Thus they never ceased their efforts to alarm Muhammad Shāh.... Two years elapsed, but the Mughals never ceased in their plotting, until at length they obtained the Emperor's consent to the administration of poison. Sayyid Qutb-ul-mulk, Abdullah Khān, died of poison given in his food on the 1st *Muharram* 1135 H. (October 11, 1722), being then about fifty-seven (lunar) years of age. He left no children. In accordance with his dying wishes he was buried at the side of his favourite mistress, a

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1. Khāfi Khān, op. cit., pp. 485-86.

2. Ibid., p. 487.

3. Muhammad Shāh's announcement of his victory to Nizām-ul-Mulk (*Majma-ul-insā*. 86 cited by Irvine, op. cit., II, p. 95.)

singing woman named Kesar Mahi, in a walled garden outside the Pumba gate of Old Delhi."<sup>1</sup>

It must be clear, from what has been stated above, that the Saiyids were in the forefront of the stage for nearly a decade, from the rise of Farrukhsiyar to the fall of Abdullah Khān.

The Saiyid Regime : 1712-20.

During this period the Emperors were mere puppets, their life being spent more inside the *zanāna* than outside of it. No wonder that, under such circumstances, 'the withering of the trees of this world was caused by the hot winds of the negligence and carelessness of rulers; and dissension among well-disposed nobles'; and 'great disorders arose in the country.'<sup>2</sup>

In the first place, Farrukh-siyar, though weak and vacillating in character, having once attained the throne, tried to kick off the ladder with which he had climbed. But this attempt, as we shall presently see, proved him fatal. Secondly, the unprecedented ascendancy of the Saiyid brothers incited jealousy, opposition, and intrigue among fellow nobles, which proved equally fatal to the Saiyids and the Empire also.

✓ At the accession of Farrukh-siyar, Saiyid Abdullah Khān had been created Chief Minister with the title, *Nawāb Qutb-ul-mulk, Yamin-ud-daula, Saiyid Abdullah Khān Bahādur, Zafar Jang, Sipah-salar, Yar-i-wafadar*. The younger brother, Husain Ali Khān, was made First Bakshī, and entitled *Umdat-ul-mulk, Amār-ul umara Bahādur, Fīroz Jang Sipah-sardār*. Among the personal favourites of the Emperor was Mīr Jumla who was officially no more than head of the pages and messengers,

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1. Ibid., p. 96. Khāfi Khān observes: 'It is said that he (Abdullah Khān) was poisoned. If so, it is extraordinary that I should have heard from the mouths of creditable men the statement that when Muhammad Shāh started on his march against Sultan Ibrāhīm and Saiyid Abdullah Khān, he vowed to God, that in the event of his gaining the victory and securing his throne, he would not kill or crush the Saiyid however great his crimes might be.... God forbid that his counsel should have been given for poison! But (*al-ilm ind Allah!*) God only knows!—E. & D., op. cit., VII, p. 519.

2. *Tarikh-i-Hindī*, op. cit., p. 43.

but *against* whose opinion even the *Chief Minister himself* found it difficult to act.<sup>1</sup> Among the provincial *subāhdārs* the most powerful was Chin Kilich Khān, son of the late Ghāziū-d dīn Khān Fīroz Jang now entitled *Nizām-ul-mulk, Bahādur, Fath Jang*. He was nominally given supreme control of the six *subhās* of the Deccan, being also empowered to select lands to be held in *jāgīr* for furnishing the pay of himself and his followers, etc. But Haidar Kuli Khān, a protégé of Mīr-Jumla, was at the same time sent as *diwan* of the whole Dakhin, with authority over every department, except those of the *Nazim*, of the report-writers, and of the deciding of suits.<sup>2</sup> Daud Khān Panni, who had acquired fame as the deputy of Zu-l fiqār Khān in the Deccan, was transferred to Ahmedabad.

The tragedy of Farrukh-siyar's life was the fruit of his own conduct. As Khāfī Khān puts it : 'From the beginning of his reign he himself brought his troubles on himself ;' he 'had no will of his own' ; he was 'inexperienced in business' ; he was 'entirely dependent on the opinion of others, for he had no resolution or discretion ;' he was 'not cautious in listening to the words of artful men.' In short, as Elphinstone has well said, Farrukh-siyar was "incapable of comprehending a great design, and too irresolute to execute a small one without support."<sup>3</sup> But if he had been wise, he would have leaned upon the Saiyid brothers for this support ; then his reign might have been a success instead of the miserable failure it turned out to be. As it happened, he leaned on the wrong side. He drew his inspiration from poisonous quarters, and died of the

1. Irvine, op. cit., I, pp. 258-60, Mīr Jumla was a native of Samarkand and had come to India in the reign of Aurangzeb. He was at first *Kāzi* of Dacca, and then warmed himself into the favour of Prince Azimu-sh Shān and Farrukh-siyar. He now rose to power and soon became *Mutamid-ul-mulk, Muazzam Khān, Khān-Khānan, Bahādur, Muzaffar Jang Mīr Jumla, Tarkhāni Sultāni*.—Ibid., pp. 297-68.

2. Ibid., pp. 262-63. Irvine points out that the Saiyid brothers did not, at any rate at the commencement, grasp at all power, as is usually supposed, but "the Emperor's friends and the Turānī chiefs obtained a lion's share."—Ibid., p. 263.

3. Elphinstone, *History of India*, p. 683.

venom he had chosen to inhale. Mīr Jumla, Jai Singh, Itikad Khān, Muhammad Amīn Khān, Khān Daurān, and all the brood of poltroons and sycophants Farrukh-siyar relied upon, brought about his ruination. Hasty writers have thrown the blame for this upon the Saiyid brothers. But whatever the personal shortcomings of both Saiyid Abdullah Khān and Said Husain Ali Khān and the character of their 'dictatorship' in the following reigns, it is certain that, so far as Farrukh-siyar was concerned, they have been more sinned against than sinning.

Farrukh-siyar owed his throne to the Saiyids, and, naturally, they expected (especially from their knowledge of their protégé's dependent character) "to exercise all the real power of the state, leaving to the emperor only the pageantry, and such a command of wealth and honours as might enable him to gratify his favourites." But, as an examination of the chief appointments under Farrukh-siyar will show, they received very little besides "the two offices which were the price of their services," "while the Emperor's friends and the Turānī chief obtained the lion's share."<sup>1</sup> And, as Khāfi Khān remarks, 'The two brothers were not inclined to bear patiently Mīr Jumla's invidious and provoking interference in their affairs.'<sup>2</sup> The result was unremitting intrigue on the part of the Saiyids' enemies, with Farrukh-siyar at its heart and centre ineptly conniving, encouraging, and promoting to his own final unmaking and utter destruction. The Saiyids throughout acted with admirable restraint and tact. But human patience has its limits : and when the furies burst Nemesis proved relentless.

A bare enumeration of the plots would suffice to reveal the situation : (1) Saiyid Husain Ali, being the more intractable of the brothers, was sent against the Rajputs, with secret despatches to Rāja Ajit Singh, offering him tempting terms in

1. Irvine, op. cit., I, p. 263.

2. E. & D., op. cit., VII, p. 443. Khāfi Khān also adds, 'and every day they overstepped the bounds of subordination and duty.' But this, as we shall presently see, is not just.

the event of his getting rid of the Imperial general.<sup>1</sup> (2) Husain Ali Khān, on the failure of the first plot, was despatched to the South as *subhadar* of the Deccan, while at the same time Daud Khān Panni was secretly incited to confront him on the way and get rid of him if possible, on promise of giving him the viceroyalty of the Deccan in place of the Saiyid. (3) A more direct attempt was made on the life of the elder Saiyid Abdullah Khān under the very nose of the Emperor : at the Nauroz ceremonies the *wazīr* was to have been surrounded and assassinated or imprisoned. But unfortunately for Farrukh-siyar, this plot also miscarried like the rest ; the *wazīr* caught scent of the trap and overawed the Imperial muster on the occasion by a larger massing of troops in advance.

In the face of such persistent danger the Saiyid brothers should have been fools if they did not also make efforts to weaken, outwit, or overawe their enemies. Thus, when the Imperial officers were fighting against the rebellious Jāts, their chieftain Chaurāman was given surreptitious support by Abdullah Khān ; Husain Ali Khān discovered the secret messages to Rāja Ajit Singh, offered him suitable favours, and finally secured his alliance ; the attempt of Daud Khān resulted in Husain Ali's victory, the death of Daud, and the discovery of further incriminating *farmāns* ; and the plot to assassinate Abdullah Khān led to the *wazīr's* S. O. S. to his brother in the South, who marched post-haste to the capital with all the forces he could rally<sup>2</sup> and brought about a revolution. The palace was surrounded by Saiyid troops, Farrukh-siyar was deposed,

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1. See Elphinstone, op. cit., p. 684. "On this occasion we hear for the first time of a plan which was adopted very frequently in this reign and afterwards. Official orders were given in one sense, and the opposing side received secret letters of a different purport, assuring them of future favour if they made a vigorous defence and defeated the imperial general sent against them. Letters were despatched to Rāja Ajit Singh urging him to make away with Husain Ali Khān in any way he could, whereupon the whole of the Bakhshi's property and treasure would become his ; and he would in addition receive other rewards."—Irvine, op. cit., I, p. 286.

2. In his haste to rush to the north, Husain Ali Khān concluded a treaty with Rāja Shāhu, advantageous to the latter, which



Rafiu-d Darajāt was raised to the throne, and finally the ex-Emperor was dragged out of the harem, insulted and brutally strangled. A few aspects of this revolution need restressing in greater detail.

Irvine assigns three causes for the state of discord under

Farrukh-siyar : (1) the nominations to office ; (2) the appropriation of the confiscated wealth of the Jahāndar-Shāhi nobles ; and (3) Farrukh-siyar's superstitious fears.

Regarding the first we have the following testimony from Khāfi Khān :—

' Abdullah Khān and Husain Ali Khān desired that no *mansabs* or promotions or appointments to office should be made without consulting them. The Emperor had given Mīr Jumla authority to sign his name, and repeatedly said, "The word of Mīr Jumla and the signature of Mīr Jumla are my word and my signature." *Kutbu-l-Mulk* Saiyid Abdullah had given to his *diwān*, a grain-dealer named Ratan Chand, the title of Rājah, and a *mansab* of 2000, and he had reposed in him authority in all government and ministerial matters. This man attended to nobody's business without some underhand arrangement for the benefit of Saiyid Abdullah Khān and himself. When an aspirant resorted to Mīr Jumla for a *man-*

Farrukh-siyar refused to ratify. In the hope of its ratification, however, he got a force of 10,000 Marathas, and an assurance to keep the peace in the Deccan during his absence. The terms of the treaty, as agreed to by Husain Ali, were to acknowledge Shāhu's claims to the whole of the territory formerly possessed by Shivāji, with the addition of later conquests ; to restore all the forts in the possession of the Mughals in that tract ; to allow the levy of *chauth* over the whole of the Deccan ; and to make a further payment of one-tenth, as *sardeshmukhi*. In return Shāhu was to pay a tribute of ten *lacs* of rupees, to furnish 15,000 horse, to preserve the tranquillity of the country, and to be answerable for any loss occasioned by depredations from whatever quarter. 10,000 Marāthas were also to accompany Husain Ali Khān to Delhi.—Elphinstone, op. cit., p. 688.

"Although Farrukh-siyar refused to ratify this agreement," observes Irvine, "there can be little doubt that on the spot it was acted upon and in 1719, after the dethronement of Farrukh-siyar, the formal deeds were issued."—Irvine, op. cit., II, 164 ; also *ibid.*, I, p. 407. See detailed terms of the treaty, Sinha, *Rise of the Peshwas*, pp. 33-4.

*sab*, for promotion, or for an appointment to office, he, acting up-rightly as the deputy of the Emperor, wrote his signature and satisfied the applicant. *This practice was contrary to all the rules of the wazir's office*; it weakened the authority of the Saiyids, and was the cause of great annoyance to the two brothers.

'Mīr Jumla also often exhibited his own devotion to the Emperor by complaining of and blaming the Saiyids, and he persuaded him by various proofs that such high offices and ministerial authority were above the ability of the Saiyids of Barha. By various unworthy artifices he brought forward evidence of their disloyalty, and by malicious statements made in private, he succeeded in turning the heart of Farrukh-siyar against the two brothers. He repeatedly urged the Emperor to make Husain Ali and Abdullah Khān prisoners. They went out on a hunting excursion to the garden of Muhsin Khān, and by various representations, he tried to stir the Emperor up to take the bold step (of seizing them), but he did not succeed.'<sup>1</sup>

'Strong altercations arose and matters went so far that both brothers refrained from going to Court and waiting upon the Emperor; they even meditated the levying of soldiers and throwing up lines of defence round their residence.'<sup>2</sup> Reports of these dissensions and of the dearness of grain caused uneasiness and disturbances in the cities far and near.<sup>3</sup>

'The Emperor called together for private consultation his well-affected nobles, who had taken part in his councils with Mīr Jumla, Khān--daurān and Muhammad Amin Khān, *and every day he brought forward a new proposition*... After a great deal of correspondence, and the mediation of the mother of the Emperor, who went to see *Kutbu-l Mulk* Saiyid Abdullah at his house, and satisfied him, it was agreed that the Saiyids should make their own arrangements (for their safety) in the fort, and that both brothers should then attend the *darbār*. Accordingly the men of Saiyid Abdullah and of Husain Ali were posted in various places under their direction; the brothers then went to wait upon the Emperor, to ask pardon for their offences. They complained of the Emperor's change of feeling, and, *taking off their swords, they laid them before*

1. Ibid., pp. 447-48.

2. This was actually done on occasions.

3. This sentence follows the next in Khāfī Khān's text.

him, and said, "If, through the words of detractors, suspicion of us has found its way into your gracious mind, order that we should be put to death upon the spot, or deprive us of our *mansabs* and send us to the holy temple. But to let the suggestions of calumniators and the words of mischief-making designing men operate to the insult and to the injury of the life and property of the faithful is far from being the practice of just-minded kings."

*'To put away strife, and lay the foundations of peace, it was settled that Mir Jumla should depart to the suba of Azimābād (Patna) . . . and Husain Ali should go to the Deccan).* So with all despatch Mir Jumla was presented with his robe, and was sent off to Patna. But the disease was too deep-rooted for such palliatives to act. The irritation was suspended but never cured. Before Husain Ali Khān left, he had also told the Emperor, *"If in my absence you recall Mir Jumla to your presence, or if my brother, Kutbu-l Mulk Saiyid Abdullah, again receives similar treatment, you may rely upon my being here from the Dakhin in the course of twenty days."*<sup>1</sup>

Husain Ali Khān's threat was literally carried out under circumstances too complicated to be adequately described within our limited compass. Yet the physiognomy of the situation might be indicated by a few snatches from Khāfi Khān :—

(a) 'Mir Jumla found it impossible to remain at Patna, with honour, in consequence of the excessive demands which the army made upon him for pay. He had disbursed a large sum of Government treasure, but their demands and the loud cries raised by the peasantry against their violence made him resolve to go off with all speed to Delhi. . . There was a general rumour that Mir Jumla had been recalled, and that Saiyid Abdullah Khān was to be made prisoner. . . (But) he was coldly received, and he was severely censured (by the Emperor) for the wretched state of the people of Patna, and for having come to Court without permission. . . . But intelligent men looked on all this as trick and artifice to secure the imprisonment of the *wazir*. About the same time, either by design or by accident, . . . bodies of horsemen appeared in the streets and *bazārs* armed and prepared for battle. On the other side the officers of Saiyid Abdullah, with suitable forces, ready accoutred and mounted on elephants and horses, held themselves ready for a con-

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1. Ibid., pp. 449-50.

fict until nightfall.... At length it was deemed expedient, in order to quell the disturbance and pacify *Kutbu-l Mulk*, that the Emperor should look with anger upon Mir Jumla, diminish his *mansab*, remove him from the *suba* of Azimābād (Patna), and appoint him to that of the Punjab.... For a long time it was the talk of strife-makers and restless men that the Emperor had sent Mir Jumla to Sirhind and the Punjab, as a matter of policy, and that he intended to recall him. Whenever the Emperor went out into the country round the capital to hunt, and remained out for three or four months, the rumour spread from house to house, and from tent to tent, that he had come out for the purpose of making Saiyid Abdullah prisoner. On the other side, the Saiyid was suspicious, and continued to enlist soldiers, but he engaged very few who were not Saiyids or inhabitants of Barha.<sup>1</sup>

(b) 'In these evil days there was at Court a Kashmiri of low origin, named Muhammad Murād, an idle babbler of disreputable character, who was the common talk of everybody. In the reign of Bahādur Shāh he had obtained, through the interest of Jahāndar Shāh, a *mansab* of 1000 and the title of *Wakālat Khān*..... He was introduced to Farrukh-siyar, and, availing himself of the opportunity,... he obtained such an ascendancy over him that in a short time he received the title of *Rukm-d daula Itiqād Khān Farrukh-Shāhī*, and an increase of his *jāgīr* from 1000 to 7000 and 10,000 horse. He became the Emperor's confidential adviser and joined in recommending the overthrow of the rule of the Saiyids of Barha. Not a day passed without his receiving jewels of great value, ornamental weapons, dresses or some great gift.' The Emperor seriously contemplated making him *wazīr* in place of Saiyid Abdullah. He openly expressed to Nizāmu-l Mulk and Sarbuland Khān, men worthier to occupy the place, "I know of no person more fit for the post of *wazīr* than Itiqād Khān." Every exalted noble of Iran and of Turan, when he heard that it was the Emperor's design to bestow the important office of *wazīr*, with every sign of partiality, upon such a prating, base-born, infamous person, felt the greatest disgust. They were heart-broken, but they were not disposed to obey and submit to Itiqād Khān.

'In the midst of such uneasy feeling the *I'd-i fitr* occurred, and nearly 70,000 horse and foot went in the royal procession to the *I'd-gah*. There was great apprehension among all classes, in expectation that Saiyid Abdullah Khān was about to be made

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1. Ibid.

prisoner. On that day Saiyid Abdullah had not with him more than four or five thousand horse.... After this Saiyid Abdullah began to enlist soldiers. In former days he entertained few except Saiyids of Barha, because he had full reliance on their courage and devotion; but he now gave orders for the enlistment of 20,000 men of all tribes.

'When this disturbing intelligence reached *Amīru-l umara* Husain Ali in the Dakhin, his apprehensions were aroused, and he resolved to proceed to Court.... day by day the dissension and rupture between Saiyid Abdullah and the Emperor grew wider..... Letters arrived from Husain Ali, representing his wish to come to Court, and complaining that the climate of the Dakhin did not agree with him.... On the other hand, letters reached him from his brother urging him to come quickly to Court.....

'At the end of *Zi-l hijja*, he left Aurangabad, and, after halting a week for making arrangements, at the beginning of *Muharram*, 1131 H., having put his artillery in order, and done his best to secure the good-will of the *amīrs* and the Mahrattas, he.... commenced his march upon Delhi ... Nearly 16,000 Mahrattas marched with him.

(d) Meanwhile many of the 'friends' of the Emperor also deserted to the enemy, mainly on account of Farrukh-siyar's negligence and the weariness of the Saiyids. 'Sarbuland Khān, in consequence of the resumption of his *jāgīr*, and the transfer of his prosperous lands to Mir Jumla, and through want of money, inability to pay his soldiers, and pressing demands, had retired from service, resigned his *mansab*, and had given up his elephants, horses, and household effects to his creditors, with the intention of becoming a religious mendicant. Saiyid Abdullah Khān having heard of this, went to him and endeavoured to console him. He furnished him with money, elephants and horses, and appointed him *subādār* of Kabul, thus binding him to him by the obligation of kindness. Nizām-ul-mulk also, through the hard usage of the times favourable only to the base, was called from Murādābād with the expectation of being made *wazīr* but his office and *jāgīr* were given to Itiqād Khān. He was disgusted and burnt with rage against the worthless (favourite). Saiyid Abdullah Khān did his best to console him, and promised him the *subadārī* of Malwa. Itimādu-d-daula, who had come to Court without leave or order, fell into disgrace, and was deprived of his *mansab*. Saiyid Abdullah consoled him also. He likewise won over fortune seekers by rendering them assistance, and inquiring about their affairs. Khān-daurān, who

from the beginning had been reckoned as an associate of Mīr Jumla, and one of the Emperor's friends, was also brought over to the side of the minister.' Before long Ajit Singh (the Emperor's father-in-law) and Itiqād Khān also were scared away, leaving the Emperor all but alone when the storm burst.

"It seems that the servants of the State have made disobedience of orders a habit," said Saiyid Abdullah when Mīr Jumla and M. Amin left their respective charges without or against Imperial orders. But Husain Ali Khān's was the most flagrant act of defiance to Farrukh-siyar's express orders. For diplomatic purposes, while he still continued his march to the capital, Husain Ali declared, "If the Emperor no longer retains any animosity and rancour against us, and will deal with us kindly and without malice, we have no other desire but to prove our obedience and loyalty. After paying my homage and reassuring myself about sundry matters I will quickly return to Dakhin." But when he was encamped near the *lāt* of Firoz Shāh, two or three *kos* from Delhi, he 'showed rebellious designs by ordering his drums to be beaten loudly in defiance; for it is contrary to all rule for (a subject's) drums to be beaten near the residence of the Emperor. Complaining of the Emperor, he entered his tents, and repeatedly said that *he no longer reckoned himself among the servants of the monarch*. "I will maintain the honour of my race, and care neither for loss of my *mansab* nor for royal favour."

'But the strangest thing was that the heedless Emperor,' continues Khāfi Khān, 'although he heard the sounds of the hostile drums and trumpets, which rose so boldly and publicly—and although at the sound of the drum other drums in every street and market beat to arms—even then he did not come to his senses. All resolution and prudence was cast aside. Now raging with anger, he rolled up his sleeves (for action), threatening vengeance against the two brothers; now taking a conciliatory turn, he sat behind the curtain of dissimulation, and opened the door of amity upon the face of enmity . . . . . At the sight of this change of fortune, of the progress of the rebellion of the two ministers, and of the supineness and want of perception in the Emperor, men lost all heart, and many taking their clue from him, went, to wait upon Saiyid Husain Ali.

'Four or five days after the arrival of Husain Ali, his brother Saiyid Abdullah made a statement of his brother's grievances, and said that if Rāja Jai Singh, the disturbing spirit, were sent home

to his country, and if the nominations to the artillery, and to the office of President of the Privy Council, and the appointments of the Emperor's personal attendants, were made in favour of Husain Ali's adherents, and if the fortress were placed under his control, then he would come without any apprehension to pay his homage, and all might be settled to the satisfaction of the two brothers.

'The poor dull-witted Emperor, unmindful of the deceitfulness of delusive fortune, *granted the demands of the Saiyids*. He consented to give over the entire control of the appointments to Saiyid Abdullah, the other Saiyids of Barha, and their supporters; Itiqād Khān and other of his favourites were to be dismissed.

'On the 3rd *Rabiu-l ākhair* Rājādhirāj (Jai Singh), under an order which did not allow of a day's delay, left Delhi for Amber, his home.... On the 5th, Saiyad Abdullah and Mahārāja Ajit Singh, with their followers, entered the citadel, and, removing the Emperor's men from the gates, they made their own dispositions, and placed their own men in charge. Of all the great men near the Emperor, none were left near him or near the gates of the fortress, except Itiqād Khān...., whose absence or presence made no difference, and some helpless attendants and eunuchs.

'*Amiru-l umara* Husain Ali, with regal pomp and display, mounted his horse, and entered the fort, around which his army, and that of the Mahrattas, had taken post . . . . . Saiyid Abdullah Khān went to the distracted Emperor Farrukh-siyar, along with Ajit Singh, and poured forth his grievances. He said, "In return for all our services to you and your ancestors, we have received nothing from you, ungrateful King, but evil thoughts and suspicions and treacherous designs. We have, as proofs of our words, *farmāns* which you sent to the irreligious Daud Khān Afghan, and other miscreants in the Dakhin, directing them to oppose and slay your faithful servant (Husain Ali Khān) . . .<sup>1</sup> Our fears and suspicions will not be removed until the control over all the great offices shall be placed in our hands."

'The bewildered Emperor made some excuses and promises; but the talk went on to a great length, and many bitter and offensive words were said. The Emperor got angry and was unable to restrain himself further. He first said a few words condemning Itiqād Khān, who was in fact that prime cause of the mischief,

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1. Similar *farmāns* had also been addressed to Rājas Ajit Singh and Shāhu.

and he then censured Saiyid Abdullah. Itiqād Khān made some foolish statements, excusing himself; but both he and the emperor had lost all control over themselves. Saiyid Abdullah then interfered, and, abusing Itiqād Khān, he allowed him no retort, but ordered him to be turned out of the fortress . . . . . All round and about the fortress the cries of strife arose, and the Emperor, feeling his reverse of fortune, went into the female apartments . . . . That night all the city was full of dread and helplessness. The soldiers of the two brothers were posted fully armed in all the streets and markets, and no one knew what was passing in the fort, or what would happen.<sup>1</sup>

The end of the tragedy has already been described. Two more Princes (Rafiud-d Darajāt and Rafiud-d Daula) tumbled from the throne into the grave in one single year (1719), and a fourth was crowned, viz. Muhammad Shāh. We must now turn to the fall of the King-makers under this more fortunate Prince.

It has been already related that Saiyid Husain Ali Khān was murdered in the Deccan, and Abdullah Khān, ranking under this calamity, attempted to set up Sultan Ibrāhīm as Emperor in place of Muhammad Shāh; the failure of this *coup* proved his ruin also. Both these events took place in the year 1720, i.e. within less than two years of the palace revolution that put the Saiyids in actual power : Farrukh-siyar was dethroned in February 1719; Husain Ali Khān was murdered in October 1720; and Abdullah Khān was defeated and imprisoned in November 1720. The so-called *Dictatorship*, therefore, shrinks to an actual duration of twenty unsettled months! During the rest of the period 1712-19 other counsels than those of these *Dictators* prevailed with the Emperors. The prestige acquired by the Saiyid brothers on account of their deposition of Jahāndar Shāh, the enthronement of Farrukh-siyar and his three successors in the course of a single year, and the military backing they had during the larger part of their tenure, have

1. E. & D., op. cit., VII, pp. 468-78.



served to bloat their reputation for good or evil. But in reality, Abdullah Khān the wazīr, spent most of his time in the pursuit of his own pleasures<sup>1</sup>; so much so, that he did not even attend personally to State business for months together, and had to be warned frequently against such delinquency. His agent Ratan Chand, no doubt, had a considerable hold upon the administration; but even this was challenged, often not unsuccessfully, by the King's favourites: Mīr Jumla and others practically neutralised his power. Husain Ali Khān, the *amīru-l umara*, with his fiery and irascible temper, only flashed like lightning behind the clouds of intrigue. The two brothers, kept up a dignity that indicated strength and self-confidence, and maintained a nonchalance towards all others that did not affect their profit and status. The swiftness of their fall showed the essential weakness of their position, which was being undermined at the very moment they were feeling themselves most unassailable.

The circumstances of the collapse of the Saiyid regime are bound up with the rise of a new star, viz. Nizāmu-l Mulk, and will be described in the next section. Here it is appropriate to close with the meed of praise the critical and not very sympathetic Khāfi Khān thought it his duty all the same to bestow on the two Saiyids:

'In the course of this narrative', he writes candidly, 'upon some points the pen has been used to condemn the two brothers, the martyrs of misfortune, and this cannot now be rectified; but in atonement I will now write a few words upon the excellence and beauty of character, the love of justice, and the liberality of both brothers . . . . Both the brothers were distinguished in their day for their generosity and leniency towards all mankind. The inhabitants of those countries which were innocent of contumacy

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1. Khāfi Khān relates, 'Siayid Abdu-llah Khān was very fond of women, and the common talk was that two or three of the late King's (Farrukh-siyar's) beauties pleased him, and he took them to himself, although for the gratification of his . . . desires, he had seventy or eighty beautiful women.'—Ibid., p. 481. See also Irvine, op. cit., I, pp. 416-17.

and selfishness made no complaints of the rule of the Saiyids. In liberality and kindness to learned men and to the needy, and in protection of men of merit, Husain Ali Khān excelled his elder brother, and was the Hatim suited to his day. Numbers owed their comfort to the cooked food and raw grain which he gave away. At the time of the scarcity at Aurangabad, he appropriated a large sum of money and a great quantity of grain to supply the wants of the poor and of widows. The reservoir at Aurangabad was begun by him, . . . which, in summer when water is scarce, relieves the sufferings of the inhabitants. In their native country of Barha they built *sarais*, bridges and other buildings for the public benefit. Saiyid Abdu-llah was remarkable for his patience, endurance, and wide sympathy.<sup>1</sup>

A few significant facts revealing the character and policy of the Saiyids might also be adduced :—(1) Under their influence the *Jiziya* was abolished at the accession of Farrukh-siyar. An attempt was made by their rivals at Court a few years later to reimpose it, which they did for a time, but so long as the Saiyids were in power this could not be permanent.<sup>2</sup> (2) Rāja Ajit Singh was transformed from a rebel into a strong ally and induced to give his daughter in marriage to Farrukh-siyar. His alienation later was the fruit of Farrukh-siyar's own folly. (3) Likewise, the Marathas, under the influence of Husain Ali Khān, were won over by the grant of their utmost demands of *chaut* and *sardeshmukhi*. If Farrukh-siyar had been tactful and wise they could have been secured as allies of the Empire. But they became the instruments of his destruction in the hands of the Saiyids because of Farrukh-siyar's own ineptitude. (4) Abdullah Khān's sympathy with the rebellious Jāts has already been mentioned (5) In the first year of Farrukh-siyar's reign, there took place a clash between Hindus and Muslims at Ahmedabad :

'It happened that in the night in which the Hindus perform the ceremony of Huli (*holi*), one of them was going to do so in his own house-yard, a small part of which was connected with some

1. Ibid., pp. 519-20.

2. See, Irvine, op. cit., I, pp. 246, 334, 404, and 11, p. 103.

Mussulman's house, when the latter objected to it. The Hindu having pleaded that every man was master in his own house, paid no regard to the objection, and finished his ceremony. The very next day the Mussulman, turning the Hindu's argument against himself brought a cow within that very yard, and killed her for the purpose of distributing beef to the poor, as it was the anniversary of the death of the saint Ali. This action brought upon them all the Hindus of that quarter, who having overpowered the Mussulmans, obliged them to fly for their lives, and to conceal themselves in their houses. Transported by religious fury, the Hindus sought out the butcher who had slaughtered the cow; but not finding him, they dragged his son, an innocent youth of fourteen, into that very yard, and killed him. The Mussulmans, shocked at the outrage, created an outcry throughout the city, and drew after them multitudes of the Mussulman inhabitants, among whom were some thousands of Daud Khān Peny's (i.e. of the governor of Ahmadabad) Afghan soldiers. The whole now repaired to the *kazy* (the judge), who did not choose to meddle in the affair when he knew that the governor had taken side with the Hindus, and shut his door. This only tended to incense the Mussulmans the more, who carried away by their fury, and possibly urged on by the *kazy* himself, demolished and burned his gate, and having seized his person, they proceeded to set fire to the shops in the marketplace, and to many Hindu houses. They would have gone on burning and destroying, had they not been opposed by one Capur Chand, a jewel merchant, much in favour with the governor, and a violent opponent of the Mussulmans. This man, seeing his own house in danger, armed himself and friends, shut the gate and defended it. He placed musketeers over the gate, opened loop-holes through the parapets, and in the ensuing fray numbers of lives were lost. The disturbance continued for some days, all the shops were shut, and business was at a stand. At length the tumult subsided, the Mussulmans who thought themselves aggrieved, deputed three persons of character to carry their complaints to Court. These were the very men that had been selected on a former occasion to manage an accommodation between the Mussulmans on the one side and the governor and Hindus on the other. They were Shāh Abdul-vahid, Shāh Mahomed Ali (an eminent preacher), and Abdul-aziz. Daud Khān (the governor) who found himself identified in this affair deputed Capur Chand, after having put into his hand a narrative of the whole transaction, signed by the governor, the *kazy*, the commander of the troops, and all the crown officers, which *certified that the Hindus were not in the wrong, and that the Mussulmans were the aggressors*. As soon as the three deputies arrived at the capital they were cast into pri-

son through the influence of *Ratan Chand*, who found means to stifle their complaints. And God only knows how long these innocent persons had remained in confinement, had not Khwaja Mahomed Jafer, a dervish, chanced to hear of them and use his interest in their behalf. This holy man was no less a person than brother to Khān Daurān, one of the principal nobles of the Court; a pious man, who having devoted himself to God, had renounced the world and lived retired. It was in his retreat that he heard of *Ratan Chand's cruel partiality*, and in consequence he requested his brother to procure the release of those unfortunate persons.<sup>1</sup>

Muhammadan writers attribute the corruption of the Saiyids to the influence of *Ratan Chand*. Speaking of their faults, Khāfi Khān writes, 'These were all attributable to the evil influence of *Ratan Chand*, his *dīwān*, who having been raised to a position above his capacity, laboured hard to annoy the people.'<sup>2</sup>

### III. NIZĀMU-L MULK

The overthrow of the Saiyids was due to the intrigues of a party at Court and outside that worked Parties at Court. incessantly against them. This opposition was mainly comprised of foreigners—nobles and adventurers from Iran and Turan—who looked upon the Saiyids as too

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1. *Siyar-ul Mutakherin*, pp. 65-7 (Briggs).

2. But this malign influence of *Ratan Chand* does not seem to have affected Husain Ali's integrity so much, after all, if the following incident narrated by Khāfi Khān himself is any indication:—

'Mulla Abdu-l Ghafur Bhora, chief of the merchants in the port of Surat, died leaving a *kror* and several *lacs* of rupees in cash and effects. Although he left heirs, Haidar Kuli Khān, who was then *mutasaddi* of the port, in order to show his zeal and his desire to please the Emperor Farrukh-siyar, seized upon all the property, and made a report to Court. Just at this time the change of government occurred which has been related, and Abdu-l Hai, one of the sons, went to Court to complain, and he stated the case to the two brothers. He offered to pay fifteen *lacs* of rupees for the release of the property, besides the sums which he promised *Ratan Chand* and other of the officials'. Husain Ali Khān to the suplicants' great surprise and relief one morning called his *dīwān* and asked him 'to send for Abdu-l Hai, and to remove all claim to the

Indianised, pro-Hindu, and inclined to heresy. Owen states, "The Seiads of Barha, though of alleged exotic origin were old inhabitants of India, and prided themselves on being Hindostanees. As such their sympathies would naturally be with the natives, rather than with the Mogul conquering class of foreigners. And although they were Mussulmans, they were also *Shias*, another cause of estrangement between them and the Moguls, who were mostly *Soonees*, and a strong ground for aversion to Aurangzib's reactionary and persecuting policy, and for rallying what I may call nationalist sentiment to their side under the banner of toleration and political equality, as established by Akbar."<sup>1</sup> Irvine refers to a greater multiplicity of Parties at Court : (1) The Mughal, Turānī, or Irānī "formed the backbone of the army of occupation. Their numbers were increased still further during the twenty-five years or more, from 1680 to 1707, during which Alamgir waged incessant war in the Dakhin, with the local Muhammadan States and then with the Mahrattas."<sup>2</sup> (2) The Afghans or Pathāns 'had a talent for forming permanent settlements in India, which neither the Mughal nor the Persian has displayed ; . . . . (and) the Afghans were much prized as valiant soldiers. (But) their weakness was too great a love of money, and too great a readiness to desert one employer for

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property, and to present him with a robe and a horse, *without his having to spend a dām or diram, and without having to apply to any other person.*—E. & D., op. cit., VII, pp. 519-21. Irvine also points out how by the intercession of Saiyid Abdullah, who "was affable and helpful, also, for a wonder, most prompt in action," the East India Company's embassy to Farrukh-siyar succeeded expeditiously, "and still more wonderful, the Wazir accepted no present."—Irvine, op. cit., II, p. 99.

1. Owen, *The Fall of the Mogul Empire*, pp. 137-38.

2. They were "fighting men from the fatherland of the imperial house." If from north of the Oxus they were Turānī Mughals, if from south of it they were Irānī Mughals, all foreign Musalmans coming from beyond Afghanistan being vaguely styled 'Mughals'. Although the former of these were *Sunnīs* and the latter mostly *Shia*; "as against the Hindustanis the two sections were always ready to combine."—Irvine, op. cit., I, pp. 272-73.

another, if he made a higher bid. They were too rough and illiterate to obtain much distinction in civil life." During Shāh Jahān's reign they were definitely discouraged; but under Aurangzeb they again found favour, "those nobles who had Afghan soldiers receiving the most consideration." (3) Then there were other foreigners, serving in small numbers, like the Arabs, Habshis, Rumis, and Farangis (Europeans). "Eunuchs were generally of Habshi race, and the chief police officer of Delhi was frequently a Habshi." (4) "In opposition to the Mughal or foreign, was the home-born or Hindustānī party. It was made up of Muhammadans born in India, many of them descended in the second or third generation from foreign immigrants. Men like the Sayyids of Barha, for instance, whose ancestors had settled in India many generations before, came, of course, under the description of Hindustani or *Hindustān-za* (*Indian-born*). To this class also belonged all the Rajput and Jat chiefs, and other powerful Hindu land-owners. Naturally, too, the very numerous and industrious body of Hindus, who filled all the subordinate offices of a civil nature, attached themselves to the same side. Punjab Khatri were very numerous in this official class; most of the rest were Agarwal Baniyas or Kāyaths. It also comprised many Muhammadans from Kashmir, who seem to have rivalled the Hindus as secretaries and men of business."<sup>1</sup>

But whatever the other distinctions among the parties, the most important was the cross-division into "Emperor's friends and Wazir's friends."<sup>2</sup> We have already witnessed the interplay of these two factions during their incubating period under Farrukh-siyar. The palace revolutions of King-making were the achievements of the latter with all their imposing array of forces; whereas, the former, to all appearances less impressive to start with, were the authors of the more effective and real revolution that was implied in the fall of the Saiyids. This triumph of the King's "friends"

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1. Ibid., pp. 273-75.

2. Ibid., p. 275.

over the "King-makers" is one of the most fascinating stories recorded in history. The authors of it were Mīr Jumla, Itiqād Khān, Khān Daurān, Muhammad Amīn Khān (Itimādu-d daula), the mother of Muhammad Shāh, and Muhammad Shāh the Emperor himself. But *qui bono*? By all their combined activities one man, whose name is not mentioned among theirs, benefited most. That man rides like a colossus over the chaotic history of the Later Mughals that still remains to be told. He was none other than CHIN KILICH KHĀN, ASAF JHA, NIZĀMU-L MULK, son of the blind Mughal noble Ghāzī-ud-din Khān Fīrūz Jang,<sup>1</sup> who was first governor of the Deccan and then of Gujarat.

"Perhaps the most important person in the group of men that rose into the very front rank upon Nizāmu-l Mulka's Farrukh-siyar's accession," writes Irvine, Antecedents, "was Nizāmu-l mulk."<sup>2</sup> He was nearly forty-three (lunar) years of age at that time (1712). He had already distinguished himself, both as a soldier and as a provincial governor, under Alamgīr. But from his appointment to the six *subhas* of the Deccan, in 1713, to his death, thirty-five years later, in 1748, he occupied a position of pre-eminence which he never lost.

His ancestors had come from Samarkand. His grandfather, Khwaja Abid, took service under Aurangzeb when he was about to start for the conquest of the Pea-cock throne. Nearly thirty years later he found himself governor of Zafarabad Bidar, and died, on 30th January 1687, of a wound received during the siege of Golkonda. Six years earlier he had received the title of *Kīlich Khān*. His eldest son, Mīr Shahabu-d din, likewise, rose to great eminence in the reign of Aurangzeb. He first made his mark by his loyalty and heroism during the trying days of Prince Akbar's rebellion in Rajputana. He was also with Aurangzeb during the quarter century of his arduous and desperate warfare in the Deccan. He was conspicuous in the capture of Haidarabad and Deogarh,

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1. Nizāmu-l Mulka's mother was the daughter of Shāh Jahān's *Wazir Sadullah Khān*.

2. Irvine, op. cit., I, p. 268.

and was sent against Sambhāji in 1687-88. He pursued the Marathas into Malwa in 1703-4. But after the death of Aurangzeb (1707) he took no part in the war of succession; the Turānis generally were not in favour with Bahādur Shāh. Hence, Ghāziū-d din Firūz Jang, as he was then called, was transferred by that Emperor to Gujarat, as leaving him in the Deccan was considered too dangerous. He died at Ahmadabad on 8th December 1710. During the last twenty years of his life, Ghāziū-d din was totally blind, yet continued in active service—a unique instance! His rank was 7,000 *zāt* and he left behind him a legacy of “1½ lakhs of Rupees in bills on bankers, 133,000 gold *muhars*, 25,000 *hun* (gold) and *nīm-paoli* (gold), 17,000 gold *paoli*, 400 *adheli* (half) and 8,000 whole silver *paoli*, 140 horses, 300 camels, 400 oxen and 38 elephants.”

Mir Kamru-d din Ghāziū-d din's son, was born on 11th August 1671. He entered service in his thirteenth year, and received the title of Chin Kilich Khān in 1690-1. At the time of Aurangzeb's death, he was governor of Bijapur. Bahādur Shāh appointed him *subhādār* of Oudh and *faujdār* of Gorakhpur, (Dec. 1707). His title now was *Khān Daurān Bahādur*, and his rank 6000 *zāt*, 6000 horse. On his father's death he also received his titles and rank of 7000 *zāt* and horse. After a period of comparative obscurity, on account of his own cold or hostile attitude towards Bahādur Shāh and his successor Jahāndar Shāh, he again rose to prominence under Farrukh-siyar (1712). First he was made Khān Khānan and then received the title of *Nizāmu-l Mulk Bahādur Fath Jang*. As a reward for his services at the time of Jahāndar's overthrow, he was entrusted with the government of the Deccan. But, suspecting his ambitions, only two years later, he was superseded in his southern charge by Husain Ali Khān himself. Nizāmu-l Mulk was then posted to Murādābād, whence he was recalled to Court by Farrukh-siyar during the days of the crisis. Being disappointed in his expectations from that Emperor, and owing

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1. “He was once so disgusted with the scanty notice which the government was taking of him that he was dissuaded from resigning on the importunities of the then Vazīr, Munim Khān. But on the Emperor confiscating his father's property, he resigned all his titles and retired from active service.”—Kamdar and Shah, *op cit.*, pp. 221-22.



to the suddenness of the *coup de main* of Husain Ali Khān, he thought it expedient to cast in his lot with the Saiyids for the time being. At first they thought of sending him to Bihar, in order to keep him at a distance from the capital, but later they decided, as the better arrangement, to keep him in Malwa, where he would be, as it were, between two fires : the relations of the Saiyids being governors on either side, in the Deccan and at Akbarabad. "Remembering how short his tenure of the Dakhin had been, Nizām-ul-mulk made his acceptance of Malwa conditional on a solemn agreement that he should not be removed again. The promise was given and the Nawab started for Ujjain on 24th *Rabi* II, 1131 H. (15th March 1719), a few days after the accession of Rafī-ud-darajat, taking the precaution to remove the whole of his family and possessions, thus leaving no hostages behind him

Governor of Malwa, 1719. in the Saiyids' hands."<sup>1</sup> Khāfī Khān adds,

'and there accompanied him more than a thousand companions, *mansabdārs* and *jāgīrdārs*, who were poor and sick at heart with the unkindness shown by the Saiyids and through pay being in arrears. (Once in Malwa), Nizām-ul-Mulk busied himself in collecting soldiers and artillery, which are necessary for governing the world and keeping it in order. He gave 500 horses to Muhammad Ghiyas Khān for his Mughal fraternity, and turned them into horsemen. He lent large sums of money to... others, binding them to himself by the bonds of debt and kindness.'<sup>2</sup>

These bellicose activities of the Nizām aroused the suspicions of the watchful Saiyids, and Husain Ali Khān called for an explanation. The wily Nawāb replied that kingdoms could not be governed with rose-water. He pointed out that people who had never been in Malwa, could not be expected to know its condition ; but Husain Ali Khān having passed through that province lately must know the facts well. "The Mahrattas, with over fifty thousand horsemen, were harrying it ; if troops

1. Irvine, op. cit., II, p. 17.

2. E. & D., op. cit., VII, p. 488.

in large numbers were not entertained, what hope was there of defending the country from their ravages?" For this reason he had added to his resources in men and *matériel*.

This explanation, however, failed to satisfy Husain Ali Khān, and a *farmān* was issued to him, against all previous assurances, recalling him from Malwa. It was stated therein that, for the protection of the Deccan, Husain Ali Khān should himself take charge of that province, and that Nizāmu-l Mulk could make his own choice out of Akbarabad, Allahabad, Multan, and Burhanpur. "This was a distinct breach of faith and no doubt confirmed Nizāmu-l-mulk in the belief that he was to be destroyed." Confirmation of this danger also came to him from other quarters: 'After the accession of Muhammad Shāh,' according to Khafī Khān, 'letters were sent by him and by his mother, Maryam Makāni, through the medium of Itimādu-d daula Mahammad Amīn Khān, to Nizāmu-l-Mulk, informing him of the constraint used by the Saiyids was so strict that he had only liberty to go to service on the Sabbath, and that he had no power of giving any orders; that the Saiyids, in their futile scheming, proposed, after settling the affairs of Nikū-siyar and Giridhar, to get rid of Nizāmmu-l Mulk and then to do as they pleased; and that they (Muhammad Shāh and his mother) had full reliance on Nizāmu-l Mulk, that he would not fail in the loyalty which his ancestors had ever exhibited.'

Khāfi Khān continues, 'Nizāmu-l Mulk had employed the interval of eight or nine months in collecting seven or eight thousand horse and materials of war. He was cautious and watchful, and he had formed the design of conquering the Dakhin, of setting free that land of treasure and of soldiers. He now received notice from his *vakils* that the Saiyids had sent officers to summon him to the presence. But before these he had received letters from the Emperor and from private friends, telling him there was no time to be lost, and that what he had to do he must do quickly.'<sup>1</sup>

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1. E. & D. op. cit., VII, pp. 488-89.

Meanwhile, under the ostensible ground of fetching his family from Aurangabad, but really to chastise Nizāmu-l Mulk, Hussain Ali Khān despatched Saiyid Dilāwar Ali Khān with a large force to the south. At the same time, he ordered his nephew Saiyid Alam Ali Khān, who was at Aurangabad to get ready for an offensive in that direction.

'Nizāmu-l Mulk perceived that the brothers had the fixed intention of overthrowing the royal house and of removing the *Khalifa* of the world. Seeing that there were no other means of safety, he consulted with his friends, and setting out from Ujjain, he made three marches towards Agra, and then turned to the Dakhin.<sup>1</sup> "What man is there holding my high station," he said, "who would not defend his honour? Victory lies hidden from us, it is the gift of the Most High, and is not gained by the greatness of a host. *I swear by the God that made me, that they bring all Hindustan against me and I will still resist undaunted.* If longer life has been decreed me, no harm will arrive; if the hour of departure is at hand, nothing can avail me."<sup>2</sup>

With this determination this man of destiny carried everything before him. By 23rd May 1720, Asirgarh and Burhānpur fell into his hands. 'Just before he got possession of Burhānpur, the children and dependants of Saifu-d din Ali Khān, brother of Husain Ali Khān, had come to that place on their way to Delhi. They were greatly alarmed when Nizāmu-l Mulk became master of the city. Some of his friends counselled him to seize upon their valuables (but he nobly refused) . . . and (to their great relief and surprise) sent an escort to guard them as far as the Nerbadda.<sup>3</sup> But his most decisive victories were against the two formidable forces that had been directed against him by Husain Ali Khān. The details of these encounters, interesting as they are, may not detain us. For considerations of space we must state only the bare result: (1) On the 19th June 1720 Nizāmu-l Mulk encountered and overthrew Dilawar Ali Khān at Pandhar "between Burhānpur and the Narmada."<sup>4</sup> Despite the characteristic heroism of the Rajputs in the army the Saiyid forces met with disaster. Nizāmu-l Mulk

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1. Ibid., p. 490.

2. Irvine, op. cit., II, p. 21.

3. Khāfi Khān, loc. cit., p. 490.

4. This engagement is also known as the battle of Khandwa.

was not even wounded. His officers asked for orders to pursue, but he refused. "He collected the wounded near his tent and sent them surgeons, healing salves and clothes. For some he provided horses, for some palankins, for some litters. On their recovery he asked them to enlist with him. As their master Husain Ali Khān was still alive, they refused; their road expenses were then paid and they departed. The body of Dilāwar Ali Khān (who died in action) was decently buried; those of the Hindus were burnt under the supervision of Rāja Indar Singh. Nizāmu-l Mulk and his troops returned to Barhānpur."<sup>1</sup>

When the news of this disaster in Khāndesh reached the Saiyid brothers on 5th July 1720 they were both shocked and perplexed. But resourceful diplomacy suggested a shameless course: '*jarmān* was issued to Nizāmu-l Mulk, accompanied by a letter from Husain Ali Khān. Therein it was stated that Dilāwar Ali Khān had been directed to go to Aurangabad to escort the writer's family to Hindustan. But, pretending orders, for which there was no foundation the said Dilāwar Ali Khān had interfered with Nizāmu-l Mulk, and, the Lord be praised! had only received what he deserved. Several persons led by love of mischief-making and devilish devices (*shaitānāt*), had written untruly of several matters in a manner likely to sow discord between them. *Alas! that such suspicions should arise between old friends!* Envious persons, by sowing dissension, hope to open a way for themselves.' But the writer, knowing your loyalty, intervened.' "By this means, I am thankful to say, your enemies were cast down and your friends made happy. His Majesty has graciously resolved to issue to you a patent for the government for the Dakhin. Accept my congratulations. Alam Ali Khān, my (adopted) son, and my family propose to return to this country; kindly furnish them with an escort and see that they are not molested on the way."<sup>2</sup>

(2) As a matter of fact, as we have already stated, Alam Ali Khān had been instructed if possible to get rid of the "old wolf." Nizāmu-l Mulk played a similar ruse with Alam Ali. He pretended that he was disbanding his army and proceeding on pilgrimage to Mecca. But, on 20th July 1720, he pitched his camp in a precipitous position full of thorny scrub close to Seogaom, in *subah* Berar. Owing to heavy rains and Maratha plundering, prices

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1. The *Ahwal-ul-Khawagin*, cited by Irvine, op. cit., II, p. 34.

2. Ibid., p. 36.

rose so high that only two to four pounds of flour sold for a rupee. 'The smell even of grass or grain did not reach the four-footed animals.' On 9th August Nizāmu-l Mulk moved his army to a place two or three *kos* from Bālāpur. The battle began the next day. Alam Ali Khān was wounded, surrounded and beheaded. At a critical moment when his elephant turned tail, this brave strippling of a Saiyid (he was only 22) 'dripping with blood from his wounds, turned his face towards the army of Nizāmu-l Mulk, and cried out that the elephant had turned his back, but he had not. All his own arrows were exhausted, but such of the enemy's arrows as struck his face, or his body, or his *howda* he quickly pulled out and turned. He received so many wounds in succession that he sank under them; and sacrificed his life for his uncles.'<sup>1</sup>

Only one course now remained open. Leaving Abdullah Khān in charge of the capital and the north, Husain Ali Khān marched south taking the Emperor with him. But there was one thorn in his side. Muhammad Amīn Khān, Itimādu-d daula, was a problem difficult to manage. He was a cousin of Nizāmu-l Mulk, and virtual leader of the Mughals at Court and in the army. He was too dangerous to be left behind, and equally precarious in the camp. To allay suspicions Muhammad Amīn Khān talked loudly in *darbār* of the baseness of Nizāmu-l Mulk's conduct and his wickedness generally; yet, in reality, not a moment passed but he was busy intriguing against his political adversaries, the Saiyids. Husain Ali, in order to humour him, always addressed him as "Respected Uncle." But despite all this cunning on either side, a plot was being hatched, all the way from Agra, for the destruction of Husain Ali Khān. The chief conspirators were Muhammad Amīn Khān, Haidar Kuli Khān (chief of the artillery), Abdu-l Ghaffur and Mir Jumla. Saiyid M. Amīn, Saadat Khān, new *faujdar* of Biana, was also admitted into the secret. A willing tool was found in Mir Haidar Beg Dughlat who though a

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1. Khāfī Khān, *op. cit.*, pp. 499-500. "The battles of Khandwa and Balapur were turning points in the history of the Deccan. They established the supremacy of the Nizām and his family there"—Kamdar and Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

Saiyid, was bought over to do the deed. Muhammad Shāh the Emperor and his mother patronised this gang with the hope of securing their liberation from the galling yoke of the King-makers.

Husain Ali Khān had been warned of this danger by discerning friends. But with the nonchalance of a Julius Caesar he only replied : " Who is there who could raise a hand against me, what plot is there, what reason for my assassination ? " <sup>1</sup>

On the appointed day Muhammad Amīn Khān affected illness. At about mid-day Husain Ali Khān was returning, in his palankin, from the Imperial presence. On his way his prospective assassin accosted him with " A complaint ! a complaint ! " and drew from his sleeve a scroll supposed to be a petition. When the Bakhshī, who seemed to know him, called him near, the complainant loudly cried imprecations upon Muhammad Amīn Khān for alleged ill-treatment. As Saiyid Husain Ali leaned on one side towards his *hooka*, at the same time reading the petition, Haidar Beg, the pretentious plaintive, stabbed him with what looked like a butcher's knife. Though the assassin was cut down on the spot, the great Saiyid too succumbed. " In the Indian Karbala a second Husain was martyred by a second Yazid. " <sup>2</sup> (8th October 1720).

On the day following this crime, a formal *darbār* was held by Muhammad Shāh. " In the interval Muhammad Amīn Khān had posted pickets of Mughals to arrest deserters, and instructions were given to the armed villagers to stop any one who tried to leave the camp. In this way many men, though partisans of the Sayyids and anxious to escape, were forced to remain. Muhammad Amīn Khān went among them in person to try and secure their adhesion. " Several nobles

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1. Irvine, op. cit., II, p. 55.

2. Ibid., p. 66. The place of the murder appears to have been Kareli (Ghat Karbali ?) 45 miles s. w. of Fathpur Sikri.—See *ibid.*, p. 58 and n ; also p. 68.

laid their offerings at the Emperor's feet, and Muhammad Amīn Khān himself was promoted to the rank of 8000 *zāt* and loaded with gifts. Khān-daurān, although he had sat on the fence to save himself from the odium of either party, was also given the same rank. Kamru-d din Khān (M. Amīn's son), Haidar Kuli Khān, and Saadat Khān respectively received ranks of 7000, 6000, and 5000.

Saiyid Abdullah Khān's reactions to these happenings have already been described in detail. He

The last of Ab- tried the old game of trying to set up a  
dullah Khān : new Prince on the throne. This resulted  
1720-22. in a tragedy both to himself and his protégé : both made their exit from life through the prison. Abdullah Khān died in 1722, and Sultan Ibrāhīm in 1746, two years before Muhammad Shāh's death. Here we must resume the story of Nizāmu-l Mulk. The death of the Saiyid brothers rid him of his greatest rivals, though the guilt of their blood was on hands other than his. He was no party to any of the intrigues that proved them fatal ; though he might have been an interested but passive witness. "With the disappearance of the Sayyids," writes Irvine, "the story attains a sort of dramatic completeness."<sup>1</sup> The author of the *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, with pardonable exaggeration, notes, 'There was some inequality in the merits of these two celebrated persons. It was universally acknowledged that Hussein Ali Khān, the younger, was superior to his elder brother in many qualifications, which bountiful heaven had bestowed on him. In actual power he excelled all the princes of his time, nay, he surpassed several that bore a character in history, for having bestowed kingdoms and crowns, and conquered empires ; but neither his power nor his life was destined to endure long. If they had it is probable that the times which we have now the mortification to behold, would not be so humiliating as they have proved, nor had the honour of Hindustan been thrown to the winds nor the Indian

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 101 n.

nobility and gentry been reduced to that deplorable condition, to which we now see them brought.<sup>1</sup>

The Saiyids had fallen in their rivalry with the Mughal or Court party, of which the principal leaders were Muhammad Amīn Khān, Haidar Kuli Khān, Saadat Ali Khān, and Nizāmu-l Mulk. The overthrow of the former, therefore, meant the triumph of the latter. Some of the promotions of these noblemen, following the murder of Husain Ali Khān, have already been noted. The final redistribution of offices came after the victory against Abdullah Khān.

According to Ghulam Husain,<sup>2</sup> the triumph was celebrated with great éclat: 'The ceremonial of the emperor's entry into his capital was fixed for Saturday, the 22nd of *Moharrem*, in the year 1133 H. (2nd Nov. 1721), which took place with suitable pomp, amidst the mingled sound of shouts, of trumpets, and kettledrums. The emperor's own suite was followed and preceded by lofty elephants, resplendent with gold and silver trappings, by beautiful slave boys and young men clad in cloth of gold, by a gold throne, and by sedans of jewel-work. Embroidered ensigns and estreamers, equally superb and elegant, were borne by crowds of servants shining in gold and silver tissue that shed a lustre around them. All these were interspersed among bodies of troops that marched in battle-array, accompanied by bands of commanders and noblemen, all superbly mounted, and conspicuous by the brightness of their arms and by the richness of their apparel. A number of beautiful horses, with saddles enamelled in gold and jewel-work, announced from afar the emperor's approach; and thus, this prince, adorned by all the graces of youth and beauty, made his appearance mounted on a gigantic elephant, and seated upon a throne that literally blazed with a profusion of jewels and rich ornaments. He directed his march through the Ajmer gate, sprinkling the way with handfuls of gold, and enticing by a liberality, long forgotten, a multitude of needy people, who had long waited for this auspicious moment. He arrived at the imperial palace at the fifth hour of the day, where the empress mother, with a number of princesses and ladies of distinc-

1. *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin*, p. 128 (Briggs).

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 184-85.



tion, waited for him at the inner door of the female apartments. The empress mother holding a large plate of gold and silver, filled with new coins of several kinds, and also with a variety of gems and precious jewels, poured the whole as an offering over his head ; and after wishing him a long and prosperous reign, she took him by the hand, and introduced him with the imperial sanctuary.'

On the 25th November 1720 a grand *darbār* was held in the *Diwān-ikhās*. The recipients of rewards worthy of mention were naturally the participators in the plot against the Saiyids. The brother of Husain Ali's murderer was elevated to the high rank of 4,000 ; Saadat Ali Khān, *faujdar* of Biana, was entrusted with the Government of Agra ; and Muhammad Khān Bangash, who deserted Saiyid Abdullah, was given charge of the Government of Allahabad. Muhammad Amīn Khān, the soul of the conspiracy, was made *wazir* or Prime-Minister. But unfortunately he did not long survive this official revolution. He died, on the 27th January 1721, after a short illness of four or five days. During his earlier days he had earned a notoriety for injustice and oppression of the poor. "But strange to say, from the day of signal victory over the Sayyids, when the sky had cleared and no enemy remained, he entirely changed his ways. Men of both the city and the country had dreaded the day of his accession to supreme power. To their surprise, his conduct was opposed to his previous habits ; he treated everybody fairly and kindly. Even some of the Sayyids who had deserved punishment were spared. But as far as Muhammad Shāh was concerned, he had obtained no benefit by the change of minister ; and as one writer says, '*He found over again the same viands on his table.*'"<sup>1</sup>

The jealousy between Khān-daurān and Qamaru-d din Khān, the late *wazir*'s son, resulted in the invitation to the vacant office being sent to a third and distant candidate, namely, Nizāmu-l Mulk.

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1. Irvine, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 104-5.

Nizāmu-l Mulk, on the appointment of Md. Amīn Khān to the office of *wazīr*, had wisely kept aloof from the capital. He had preferred to enjoy virtual independence to the doubtful advantages of the Premier's office. He had accordingly proceeded to the south and engaged himself in the conquest of the Carnatik and Mysore, and was making good his position against the Marathas. But when the call came from the capital, he felt it his duty to respond. On the 20th February 1722 the *wazīr*-ship was conferred upon him with the usual gifts of robes, jewels, a ring, a jewelled pen-case, etc.

But this was no bed of roses ; rather, it was that of Procrustes. The Emperor was a mere plaything in the hands of his low favourites like Koki (a clever woman of no status) and Hāfiz Khidmatgār Khān (a eunuch of the palace). Between these and envious nobles like Samsamu-d daula Khān-daurān, Nizāmu-l Mulk found himself thwarted at every step. Aurangzeb was his model in all things, and he was ambitious to restore the administration to the condition it was in under him. He tried to abolish the system of *peshkash* which had dwindled into a form of dignified bribery, and to remedy the excessive assignment of revenue-paying lands to Princes, Princesses, and nobles, which entailed a great loss to the treasury. "He also commented on the unfitness of the men appointed to high rank while old and deserving officers were in want of the necessities of life." But all his well-meant efforts proved not merely fruitless, but resulted in his estrangement from the Emperor and the nobles. 'Nizām-ul-mulk,' writes Ghulam Husain, 'who was a man of much gravity, of a reserved behaviour, and fond of power, undertook to bring about a reform in some of the most important branches of public affairs . . . . He recommended the Emperor himself to assume in public an air of more gravity and seriousness ; to put aside all levity ; to suit his behaviour to his situation ; to restrain his servants within proper bounds ; to divide his time into stated hours of business in every department, and to appoint a time for rendering justice

in person (the most important duty of all princes, and without which they cannot expect to satisfy heaven), in one word, to discharge worthily the duties incumbent on a great sovereign. To all these admonitions the emperor listened with patience, but they were not relished. That prince was yet in the prime of youth, and in the pride of dominion, and his disposition wholly bent on a life of pleasure. Nor were these representations more acceptable to most of the grandees, especially to Khān Dowrān, who could not bear to see such a man as Nizāmu-l Mulk taking the lead at Court. The vezir, therefore, was looked upon with an evil eye, and subjected to peevish expressions'.<sup>1</sup> Being over fifty years of age, his manners were ridiculed as old-fashioned by the youthful Emperor and his boon-companions. "If it has any truth at all, to this time belongs the story that Muhammad Shāh laughed in open darbar at Nizām-ul Mulk's gait and attire and Samsam-ud-daula used the expression—See how the Dakhini monkey dances!"<sup>2</sup>

The troubles with which the new *wazir* was beset were not confined to the Court and capital. Among the provincial *subahdars* also there were not a few who were jealous of him and plotted to bring about his fall. Prominent among these may be mentioned Haidar Kuli Khān, who was now Governor of Gujarat. As the reader might remember, he was *mīr atash* or head of the artillery department at the time of Husain Ali's assassination. His complicity in the murder had brought him to his present appointment. Nizāmu-l Mulk's elevation was far from pleasing to this nobleman, and, to the extent it was possible for him, he set to work to counter-act the measures of the new *wazir*. He also showed signs of asserting his independence and assuming royal insignia. Failing to bring him round by other means, Nizāmu-l Mulk secured from the Emperor an order to take charge of Ahmedabad himself. With this object he set out from Delhi on 11th November 1722.

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1. *Siyar-ul-mutakherin*, pp. 216-17.

2. Irvine, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

Haidar Kuli in his desperation tried several stratagems against this strong measure. He sent his Campaign in Gujarat and Malwa : 1722-23. son Kazim Khān, to the capital to work upon the mind of the Emperor, to bribe the nobles into his favour, and, in short, to do whatever was necessary to secure his safety and restoration. But none of these attempts succeeded. The Nizām reached Ahmedabad on the 16th February, 1723. Completely at a loss to know what to do to meet the situation, the recalcitrant Governor feigned madness and fled to the province. Nizāmu-l Mulk thus secured his new charge without having to strike a blow. So, on the 28th of the month he left Ahmedabad, leaving the province in the charge of his uncle, Hamid Khān, to act as his deputy.

On his way back to the capital, the *wazīr* also secured the submission of Dost Muhammad Khān of Bhopal, who, in 1720, had joined the service of Dilāwar Khān when that general was marching south to arrest Nizāmu-l Mulk. After this, on 25th May 1723, at Sironj, the *wazīr* appointed his second cousin Azīmu-llah Khān as deputy-governor of Malwa. On the 3rd July Nizāmu-l Mulk was back at the capital, and was received in audience by the Emperor.

But as things stood at the Court the Nizām could not continue long in his high office. His zeal for reform of the administration was not abated in the least by his earlier failures. But the favourites of the Emperor still continued their malign influences. One writer in extreme anguish of heart asks, "What good is there in the Emperor sitting like a woman secluded within four walls? If sovereigns take to women's habits and entangle themselves in their tresses, what can a good Muhammadan do, but migrate to the Holy places, or if for that journey funds be wanting, take a dose of poison and leave this for another world?"<sup>1</sup>

1. *Ahwal*, cited by Irvine, op. cit., II, p. 131.

Nizāmu-l Mulk's efforts were chiefly directed towards the stopping of corruption occasioned by the farming out of revenues, and towards the re-imposition of the *jiziya*.<sup>1</sup> This hateful tax had been abolished at the commencement of the reign owing to the intercession of Rāja Jai Singh and other loyal Hindus. The present effort of the Nizām to revive it proved abortive, as also his other reforms. A merely nominal reinstitution of the *jiziya* was for the last time made in 1725 (March-April), and thereafter it disappeared for ever. But these attempts only served to rally the Hindus on behalf of the Opposition. The Emperor was a mere tool in the hands of his corrupt favourites. As a contemporary writer puts it, 'Every one was a chief minister or an administrator of the revenues.'<sup>2</sup> Back-biters went and told Nizāmu-l Mulk that Muhammad Shāh was a worthless rake, unworthy of the throne, and worthy only to be deposed, to make room for Prince Ibrāhīm or some other worthier Prince. At the same time they went to the Emperor and poisoned his ears against the *wazīr*, who they said was ambitious like the Saiyad brothers, and hence dangerous to his person and crown. This naturally bred suspicion on either side and ultimately led to bitterness and estrangement between the Emperor and the *wazīr*. Under these circumstances, Nizāmu-l Mulk wisely thought the best course for him was to withdraw into the Deccan. But as such a step was likely to raise suspicion as to his motive, he complained of ill-health and desired a change. Delhi was too unbearable for him. On the 17th December he took formal leave of the Emperor and set out, ostensibly for his *jāgīrs* of Sambhal and Moradābād. He took his entire family with him,

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1. 'One day Nizāmu-l Mulk, with the best intentions, told the Emperor that the system of farming the *Khaliza* lands was very injurious to the country, and ought to be set aside; secondly, that the bribes which were received, under the name of *pekshkash*, were disgraceful to the Emperor and adverse to good policy; thirdly, that the *jiziya* upon infidels ought to be collected as in the days of Aurangzeb.—Khāfi Khān, op. cit., VII, p. 524.

2. Khush-hal Chand in Irvine, loc. cit., p. 132.

which gave rise to suspicions. On 18th February he wrote to Delhi expressing his intention of returning to the capital, but then marched south declaring that Malwa and Gujarat, which were his charges, were endangered by Maratha incursions. When he was sufficiently advanced, he set aside all pretexts and hastened into the Deccan. By August 1724 Nizāmu-l Mulk was safe at Aurangābād.

Meanwhile the Court and enemies of Nizāmu-l Mulk had been very active hatching a plot to officially supersede him and also if possible to get rid of him altogether. The old tactics that had been used against Saiyid Husain Ali Khān were once again set in motion. Before the Nizām reached Aurangābād, orders from the Imperial capital had been despatched to Mubārīz Khān, father of the governor of Haidarābād, appointing him to the *subādārī* of the Deccan and expecting him to march against Nizāmu-l Mulk. Unfortunately, however, for Mubārīz Khān, the *wazīr* caught scent of the whole plan and hurried to his southern capital. When the Emperor heard of this, fearing that it was too late to carry out his designs and anxious to avert the *wazīr*'s enmity, he issued counter-orders confirming the Nizām in the Deccan and asking Mubārīz to take charge of Azīmābād Patna instead. But Providence intervened : before the revised orders reached Mubārīz he had already encountered Nizāmu-l Mulk and fallen in battle.<sup>1</sup> This happened at Shakar Khera on 11th Oct., 1724. Nizāmu-l Mulk with admirable magnanimity administered relief to the wounded on both sides, by the distribution of food and medicine, and restored much of the booty (consisting of rich clothes and jewels belonging to the sons of the deceased) to its rightful owners.<sup>2</sup>

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1. For details and full career of Mubārīz Khān see *ibid.*, pp. 138-50.

2. Cf. Nizāmu-l Mulk next day provided for the burial of the dead, and took especial care that the wounds of Mubārīz Khān's

Khawaja Ahmad Khān, one of Mubārīz Khān's sons, still persisted and held out in the fort of Muhammad-nagar. Leaving him untouched for a time, Nizāmu-l Mulk occupied the city of Haidarābād and the country round it, then went on to Machhlibandar and the Carnātik. "But in the end Nizāmu-l Mulk by gentle treatment and gifts of enhanced rank, new *jāgīrs* and the revival of titles held previously in the family, induced Khawaja Ahmad Khān to hand over the keys of the fortress."

From this time may be dated the virtual independence of the Nizām and the foundation of the present Haidarābād State. The Emperor was now reconciled to the Nizām, and renewed his favours towards him. On 20th June 1725 was issued a rescript to him confirming him in the *subāhdārī* of the Deccan, though Ahmadabad and Malwa were taken away from him. There were protestations of good faith on either side; but not until twelve years later (Oct. 1737) was the Nizām called back to the Imperial capital. What transpired in the interval may be only very briefly indicated here.

"Henceforward he (Nizāmu-l Mulk) bestowed offices in the Dakhin; he made promotions in rank, conferred titles and issued assignments on the land-revenue at his own will and pleasure. The only attributes of sovereignty from which he refrained were the use of the scarlet or imperial umbrella, the recitation of the Friday prayer in his own name, and the issue of coin stamped with his own superscription. Many astrologers had prophesied that if he chose he could sit on a throne. But he repudiated the suggestion saying, 'May throne and umbrella bring good fortune to him who holds them! My

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two sons should be carefully attended to....He afterwards gave them a large amount in goods, jewels, and stuffs, to set them up in again.'—Khāfi Khān, op. cit., VII, p. 527.

business is to preserve my honour, and if this be mine what need have I of an imperial throne?' ”<sup>1</sup>

The effect of the absence of a strong man like Nizāmu-l Mulk at the helm of affairs was only chaos. At the capital and in the provinces ‘Public business was dealt with as if it were a child’s toy ; revenue business was disposed of by the heads of the army, and night-watchmen decided cases instead of the Qāzi. The Emperor was immersed in pleasure, the nobles drunk with envy and the servants of the State were starving.’ Under these conditions, Nizāmu-l Mulk was indifferent ; what should he care for the Emperor who was so weak and ungrateful ? The Marathas were getting too troublesome in the Deccan. So he encouraged them to spread their activities north of the Narmadā, that they might leave him unmolested nearer home.

Girdhar Bahādur the then governor of Malwa carried on a gallant fight against the Marathas led by Bāji Rao’s commanders, Udāji Pawār, Malhār Rao Holkar, and Rānuji Sindhia. “The fortune of war constantly varied ; but whoever might win in the field, destruction to the prosperity of the country was equally the inevitable result.” But Girdhar Bahādur fell fighting near Ujjain on 8th Dec. 1728, and the Marathas under Chimnāji Appa, brother of Bāji Rao, got a permanent footing in Malwa.<sup>2</sup> The Rajputs, especially under Sawai Jai Singh, welcomed the Marathas as a set-off against the Empire. The local *zamīndārs* too connived at their invasion, though it meant the substitution of King Stork for King Log, in order to cheat the Emperor of his revenue.

We have not the space to dwell on the activities of the Marathas in full. To cut a long story short, there were con-

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1. Irvine, op. cit., II, p. 154.

2. Ibid., pp. 242-43.



flicts followed by compromises and conflicts again; for example, on 16th July 1736, Rājah Jai Singh appointed Bāji Rao Deputy Governor of Malwa, on the latter's promise not to pillage the Imperial territories. But this was only to save appearances; the Maratha raids continued as usual. In March 1837 they were defeated by Saadat Khān's army coming from Oudh. Saadat Khān boasted to the Emperor that he had routed the Marathas and driven them from Hindustan for good. To prove that this was not the truth, Bāji Rao led an expedition to the very gates of Delhi. As he wrote to his brother Chimnāji Appa: "I was resolved to let the Emperor know the truth, to prove that I was in Hindustan, and to show him the Marathas at the gate of his capital... So I started on 26th *Zi-l Qada*, leaving the king's highway and making long marches... covering forty miles a day, in two marches I arrived at Delhi." (April 1737).<sup>1</sup>

That affairs elsewhere in the Empire were in no better condition is indicated by the following Gujarat. account of Gujarat by Khāfi Khān:—

'The Emperor Muhammad Shāh, on being informed of these events (the depredations of the Mahrattas), sent Sarbuland Khān to be Governor of Ahmedabad. Nizāmu-l Mulk recalled Hamid Khān. But although Sarbuland Khān had an army of 7 or 8 thousand horse, most of whom were veterans, and a strong force of artillery, the Mahratta forces so swarmed in the province that he was unable to settle its affairs or to punish the enemy. Their power increased from day to day, and the price of grain rose high. Sarbuland Khān was as it were besieged in the city; all that he could do was to wink at and rail at the Mahrattas, for as they numbered nearly 30,000 horse, he was unable to fight and chastise them. They

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1. Ibid., pp. 288-95. Bāji Rao gave the following reasons for his not destroying the Imperial capital, in a letter to his brother Chimnāji Appa: "As for burning the city and reducing it to ashes (we thought) Delhi is an important place, and it is no use subjecting the Emperor to indignities. Secondly, the Emperor and Khān Daurān desire to make peace, but the Mughals would not let them do so. Any unseemly behaviour on our part might spell ruin to our policy. So we dropped the idea of setting fire to the city and wrote to the Emperor."—cited by Sinha, op. cit., p. 137.

ravaged the country round Ahmedabad up to its very gates. Many merchants and traders and artisans were so ill-treated and oppressed, that they left their native land, and wandered into foreign parts. The country could not repel the ravagers, and in its desolation it was unable to pay the sum required of it for the support of the soldiers, whose numbers were excessive. The officers with parties of men demanded their pay, and used violence and insolence in extorting it. At length it was arranged that for the sake of quietness and to stop disturbances, the officers should obtain orders drawn upon bankers and merchants for the pay. With these drafts they went to the bankers, seized them, put them in prison, and tortured them until they got the money. Bir-Nagar was a flourishing town full of merchants of the famous Nagar class, who carried on there a trade amounting to *lacs* of rupees. That district, beyond all the flourishing places of Hindustan, abounded in every sort of wealth, gold, cash, and every product of nature; but was ransacked by the enemy because the *Subādārs* were unable to answer the cries of the inhabitants for protection.<sup>1</sup>

Under these circumstances, it is to be little wondered at that "the opinion prevailed that Nizāmu-l  
 Emperor Re- that "the opinion prevailed that Nizāmu-l  
 calls Nizāmu-l Mulk was the only man who could save  
 Mulk, 1737. the monarchy and stem the on-coming  
 flood of Maratha invasion." Accordingly he was once again  
 appealed to and summoned to the capital. He left Burhānpur  
 on 17th April 1737. The nature of the welcome may be indicated by the waiving of the Imperial prohibition against the beat of drums by any noble within three miles of the Emperor's residence. "Nizāmu-l Mulk caused his elephant to kneel and descending made obeisance for the honour thus done him. Crowds thronged the road and impeded progress. Within the city the roofs of the shops and houses were covered with sight-seers; while mendicants 'thicker than flies at a sweet-meat-seller's shop' gathered round the Nawab's elephant paying no heed to the sticks and bamboos with which the attendants tried to drive them off. His elephant could do no more than creep along and it was not till after mid-day that they reached the Delhi gate of the fort.... On coming before the

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1. E. & D., op. cit., VII, p. 529.

Emperor he made his offering and was honoured in return with a robe from the Emperor's own wardrobe and a jacket called a *charqab*, worn only by members of the Chaghatai house descended from Timur. The highest title that a subject could bear, that of *Asaf Jah*, that is, equal in dignity to Asaf the minister of King Solomon, was also conferred upon him. The mansion built by Sadullah Khān, the finest in Delhi, had been prepared for his quarters, and at the close of the day trays of food were sent from the imperial kitchen by the hands of eunuchs, and this practice was continued daily."<sup>1</sup>

Only three events are worthy of note in the remaining life of Nizāmu-l Mulk : (1) His defeat at Bhopal at the hands of Bāji Rao ; (2) the invasion of India by Nādir Shāh, and (3) the Nizām's final retirement into the Deccan and death in 1748. The latter two will be described in subsequent sections. Only the first need be dealt with here.

About a month after Nizāmu-l Mulk's restoration (August 1737) his son, Ghāziu-d din Khān Fīroz Jang, was made governor of Agra and Malwa *vice* Rājah Jai Singh and Bāji Rao respectively. But the condition was that the Nizām should march against the Marathas in Malwa. Accordingly Asaf Jah advanced south with about 30,000 troops as soon as the rains permitted. The Emperor was to follow with reinforcements and Nizāmu-l Mulk's second son was to join with the army from the Deccan. But before this juncture could be effected, Bāji Rao had already advanced into Central India. The sequel is best described in the following extracts from the letters of Bāji Rao :—

'The Nizām's army took refuge in Bhupal fort. I set off against him on 3rd *Ramzān* (24th Dec. 1737). He has with him the son of Sawai Jai Singh, Sabha Singh Bundela, his own son Ghāziud-din, Jāts, Ahirs, Rohilas, Rajputs etc.,....[in all] 50,000 troops. Saadat Khān's nephew (Safdar Jang) and the Kota Rājah are coming to his aid with 20,000 more men.....

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1. Irvine, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

The battle was fought on 24th or 25th Dec. and the casualties were : 'The Rajputs lost 150 men in killed, we 50 or 60 while two or four hundred were wounded .... The artillery of the Nizām did severe execution.'

There was great distress in the Mughal camp. Bāji Rao continues, 'There is famine in his (Nizām's) camp, grain is selling at four seers a Rupee. His elephants and horses are starving. The Rajputs and the Nizām are distrustful of each other. They cannot flee away as he has kept all their baggage in the city .... Malhār Rao Holkar, Rānuji Sindhia, and Jaswant Rao Puar have defeated Mir Manu Khān, the *faujdar* of Shāhjānpur, who was coming to the aid of the Nizām, near Darai Sarai and killed 1500 of his men.'

Finally 'I fought the Nizām on 3rd *Ramzān* [24th Dec.] and then invested his army. Famine raged in his camp, grass could not be had. So he sent.....to me to negotiate for terms. (Long negotiations).... On 15th *Ramzān* [5th Jan. 1738] I marched and halted one *kos* off ; the Nizām then came out and encamped beyond the lake.... Next morning he retreated to Bhupal, fighting with his artillery. But we have blockaded him as closely as we did Muhammad Khān Bangash.

'Leaving his baggage partly in Bhupal and partly in Islāmgarh, and continuing the peace talk, he is marching away at the rate of a *kos* or 1½ *kos* a day. Our forces hovering around him, have entirely cut off his grain, grass and fuel supply. Rice is selling at one Rupee a seer in his camp, and even at that price many cannot obtain it. His horses are eating the leaves of the *Butea Frondosa*. On 25th *Ramzān* [15th January] his Muslim troops ate up the artillery, and draught oxen, while the Rajputs were utterly fasting. Then he quickly settled the peace terms....his agent being Aya Mal.'

The convention was signed at Durai Sarai, 64 miles from Sironj : "In his own handwriting Nizāmu-l Mulk promised to grant Bāji Rao (1) the whole of Malwa, (2) the complete sovereignty of the territory between the Narmada and the Chambal, (3) to obtain confirmation thereof from the Emperor, and (4) to use his best endeavours to obtain fifty lakhs of Rupees to pay Bāji Rao's expenses."<sup>1</sup> After this humilia-

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1. Irvine, op. cit., pp. 302-6.

tion the Nizām re-entered Delhi only to be faced with a new crisis, viz. the invasion of Nādir Shāh. But before we proceed to deal with this crisis, however, it is necessary to describe the state of the Empire at this stage.

#### IV. DISINTEGRATION OF THE EMPIRE

The description of the Empire is a tangled skein with many threads crossing and re-crossing. To unravel it in detail would involve pursuit of the histories of the several states into which the Mughal Empire was fast resolving itself. As such a course would lead us into a task somewhat similar to the pursuit of Miltonic similes or worse, the episodes of the *Mahābhārata*, we must needs confine our observations within more severe limits. Without entering therefore into the mutual rivalries and conflicts between the *new powers* that were coming into the field, or making any attempt to go into the personal histories of the founders of principalities, like Saadat Khān, Safdar Jung, and Ali Vardhi Khān, or examining the *internal* affairs of people like the Bundelas, Rajputs, Rohillas, Marathas and the Europeans,—each of whom contributed to hasten the fall of the Empire—we shall merely outline here the break up of the Mughal dominion. Our study thus restricted, would include only the following topics : (1) The virtual separation of the provinces of Oudh, Bihar, Bengal and Orissa, from the Empire, on the one hand, and (2) the absorption of the provinces of Gujarat, Malwa, and Bundelkhand into the expanding Marathā dominion, on the other. The further history of Maratha expansion, in so far as it has direct bearing on our subject, will appear in our account of the two fateful foreign invasions that are to follow. Beyond this, the struggle between the *new powers*—the triangular contest between the Nawābs, the Marathas and the English—for the hegemony of Hindustan does not strictly fall within our purview. If the Nawāb of Oudh and Bengal, like the Nizām in the Deccan, still maintained the pretence of being Imperial officers, they did so merely to strengthen their own claims with

## DISINTEGRATION OF THE EMPIRE



the prestige of the Empire which continued to be a rallying cry down to the 'Mutiny' of 1857.

The founder of the independent principality of Oudh, which was dissolved by Dalhousie in 1856,

1. Oudh. was Mīr Muhammad Amin Saadat Khān Burhān-ul-Mulk.<sup>1</sup> He was leader of the Irānī or Persian party at the Mughal Court, and hence a rival of the Irānī *wazīr*, Nizāmu-l Mulk, whose history we have already traced. He was *faujdar* of Hindaun and Biana (about 50 milēs s.w. of Agra) in 1719-20, and, in spite of being a Saiyid and a Shia, had seen his advantage in joining the enemies of Saiyid Husain Ali Khān. He was well rewarded for his participation in the plot to assassinate the Mīr Bakhshī; being elevated to the rank of 5,000 *zāt* and 3,000 *sawār*, with the title of Saadat Khān Bahādur (Lord of Good Fortune).<sup>2</sup> For two years after this (1720-22) he was governor of Agra, when his status was further increased to 6,000 *zāt* and 5,000 *sawār*.

At this time the turbulent Jāts of Bharatpur joined with their clansmen in the Agra and Mathura districts and rose in revolt. The new governor of Agra marched against them and succeeded in capturing four of their strongholds. But he could not follow up this success as he was recalled to Court and asked to march against Rāja Ajit Singh of Mārwar.

The latter, having been a supporter of the Saiyid brothers,<sup>3</sup> avenged their fall by following an anti-Muslim policy and showed open hostility to the Imperial government. The other nobles at the Court being reluctant to undertake the punitive campaign, Saadat Khān welcomed the opportunity for further distinction. But unfortunately for him the proposal proved

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1. For his earlier life read Dr. Ashirbadi Lal Srivastava, *The First Two Nawābs of Oudh* (Lucknow, 1933).

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

3. Ajit Singh was made governor of Ajmer and Gujarat in 1719 owing to his friendliness towards the Saiyid brothers.—*Ibid.*, p. 26.



abortive on account of opposition from the jealous courtiers. And to make matters worse, the Jāts took advantage of Saadat's absence, and in an attempt to subdue them, his deputy, Nilkanth Nāgar, met his death. Saadat Khān, under these circumstances had once more to grapple with the Jāts personally. But his stars seemed to be against him. His failure resulted in the transfer of the governorship of Agra to Rāja Jai Singh Kachhwaha on 1st September 1722, as the latter made that a condition to his commanding the expedition against the Jāts.

The Emperor further showed his displeasure towards Saadat Khān by not even granting him audience but forthwith directing him to proceed to Oudh immediately. On 9th September 1722 he took charge of his new *subāh*; and its former governor, Rāja Girdhar Bahādur, was transferred to Malwa. From this date in fact, though not in name, may be commenced the history of Oudh as an independent Muslim principality. The title of 'King of Oudh' was not assumed however, until 1816, when at the instigation of Warren Hastings, Ghāzi-ud-din Haider, the 7th ruler of the house of Saadat Khān, adopted it.<sup>1</sup> The internal history of the *subāhdārī*, which is largely comprised of Saadat Khān's efforts to subjugate the recalcitrant chiefs and *zamīndārs* and consolidate his province, need not detain us here. Sometime in 1724 he married his daughter to his nephew Safdar Jung and appointed him deputy-governor of Oudh. With the *Subah* thus secured, Saadat Khān preferred to re-enter the high politics of Delhi. A detailed account of the subsequent part played by the Nawabs of Oudh in the destinies of the Empire will shortly follow. Suffice it to note here that Saadat Khān, in 1732, undertook to check the Maratha advance into North India, and made various proposals, such as his appointment to the *subāhdārī* of Agra, Malwa etc. (in addition to his holding Oudh) with a view to enable him to withstand the Marathas. But these attempts

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1. Ibid., p. 31.

and schemes proved futile owing to the usual opposition from rival nobles at Court. Nevertheless, Saadat Khān was able to inflict a defeat on the Marathas, in the vicinity of Agra, towards the close of March 1737, to which reference has already been made. The exaggerated reports of this doubtful triumph, sent by Saadat Khān to the Imperial Court, had very untoward effects : On the one hand, they drew the might of Bāji Rao upon Delhi, as the Peshwa wanted to contradict Saadat's report of the alleged Maratha discomfiture in the most unmistakable manner, and therefore led his army to the very gates of the Imperial capital, as already described ; and on the other, Saadat's rivals made use of these happenings to discredit him before the Emperor. This misadventure led to further fatalities as Nādir Shāh invaded India soon after (January 1739) and dealt a blow that left the Empire "bleeding and prostrate." It is not surprising that Saadat Khān finally conspired with the invader to humiliate the ungrateful Emperor, and after a momentary exaltation, committed suicide on 19th March 1739.<sup>1</sup> Safdar Jung succeeded him in Oudh, but more about him later.

The history of the eastern provinces of the Empire, viz.

Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, is somewhat similar to that of Oudh and the Deccan, whose accession to virtual independence we have noticed above. While these provinces nominally owned the sovereignty of the Mughal Emperor, paid tribute and even invoked his aid in times of need, otherwise ignored the Empire altogether. They therefore mark the first stage in the dissolution of the Empire ; for the most part their thoughts and activities centred round their own self-aggrandisement. A brief account of the *subāhdāri* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa should here suffice.

At the time of Aurangzeb's death (1707) Murshid Kuli Khān was deputy-governor (*naib nāzim*) and chief revenue

1. Ibid., pp. 72-8.

officer (*diwān*) of Bengal and Orissa. But the absence of the governor, Prince Azimu-sh Shān, who spent his time at the Imperial Court, made Murshid Kuli Khān the *de facto* ruler of the two provinces. He was made *de jure* governor of Bengal in 1713, by the Emperor Farrukh-siyar; Orissa was added on to his charge in 1719. Murshid Kuli's strong, honest and efficient administration, love of justice, and strict enforcement of peace and order, observes Sir Jadunath Sarkar, "increased the wealth and happiness of the people and fostered the growth of trade in the country."<sup>1</sup> He was succeeded by his son-in-law, Sujā-ud-daulah Asad Jung, in 1727. Bihar was added on to the two provinces in 1733. This triple charge was handed down by Sujā-ud daulah to his successor, Sarafrāz Khān, in 1729, still in a prosperous condition. But the licentiousness and excesses of the new Nawāb led to the usurpation of Ali Verdi Khān, one of his ablest officers. Ali Verdi Khān was till then deputy-governor at Patna. He defeated and slew the worthless Sarafrāz, on 10th April 1740, at the battle of Gheria. Bribery secured confirmation of this usurpation, by the Emperor whose assistance Ali Verdi Khān sought against his enemies. The most formidable of these were the Marathas under Rāghuji Bhonsle. The story of this conflict may be held over for the present. We must now turn our attention to the encroachments of the Marathas in other parts of the Mughal dominion, which resulted in their appropriation of the three rich provinces of Gujarat, Malwa, and Bundelkhand. This has been incidentally referred to already. A few observations, however, on the actual separation of these provinces are necessary.

Rāja Abhai Singh of Jodhpur, it will be remembered, was governor of the Mughal *subah* of Gujarat

3. Gujarat. at the moment the incursions of the Marathas, already alluded to, took place. The *Senāpati* Yeshwant Rao was in charge of the collection of *chaut* and *sardeshmukhi* in Gujarat. But he left this task in the more

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1. *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I, pp. 70-1.

capable hands of Pilāji Gaikwād who had practically made himself master of Baroda. From these beginnings arose the present progressive State of Baroda. The cowardly Abhai Singh got rid of Pilāji by assassination, but the Marathas retrieved their position under Pilāji's son Damāji Gaikwād. The latter not only recovered Dābhai and Baroda, which Abhai had taken, but attacked Ahmedabad and carried fire and sword to the very frontiers of Jodhpur (1733). The result was that Abhai Singh gave way, left the towns conquered by Damāji in his possession, and promised to pay *chaut* and *sardeshmukhi* as before, besides 80,000 rupees from the revenues of Ahmedabad. After this Abhai Singh retired to Jodhpur, leaving Gujarat in nominal charge of Ratan Singh Bhandāri. Matters went from bad to worse, and the Marathas became virtual masters of Gujarat from 1735.<sup>1</sup>

Rāja Jai Singh of Amber was governor of Malwa in 1710.

When he was called upon to subdue the  
 4. Malwa. Jāts of Agra province in 1722, Rāja Gir-  
 dhar Bahādur was appointed in Malwa. After a short interval  
 of absence he was reinstated in 1725, and was ever after ambi-  
 tious to found his own dynasty there. His successor could  
 continue in that charge only by promising the Emperor to  
 keep away the Marathas. But the Rajputs, especially Sawai  
 Jai Singh, were dreaming of a Hindu confederacy against the  
 Mughals. With this object the Marathas were encouraged  
 nay, invited into Malwa. On the other side, the Nizām, anxious  
 to divert the Marathas away from the Deccan, also connived  
 at Bāji Rao's northward movements. At the end of his expedi-  
 tion (1723-24) the Peshwa left three of his commanders in  
 Malwa, and they became respectively founders of the kingdoms  
 of Indore (Holkar), Gwalior (Sindhia), and Dhar (Pawār).<sup>2</sup>  
 In the expedition of December 1728 Rāja Girdhar died fighting

1. Sinha, *Rise of the Peshwas*, p. 107 (Allahabad, 1931).

2. *Ibid.*, p. 111 n.

gallantly against the Marathas, at Sārangpur, 50 miles to the N-E of Dewas. Encouraged by this victory, the latter marched into Bundelkhand being invited by Rāja Chhatrasāl who was fighting against the Mughal general Muhammad Khān Bangash.<sup>1</sup>

Bāji Rao, for his timely assistance, was rewarded with the  
cession of a third of Chhatrasāl's kingdom,

5. Bundelkhand, 1729. yielding an annual revenue of 33 laks of rupees. Two years after this the brave

Bundela died at the age of 82 (1731), leaving the following will to his two sons, Hirde Shāh and Jagatrai :—

1. "With the exception of expedition beyond the Jamna or the Chambal, both brothers should join Bāji Rao Sāheb in every campaign, and should share in the plunder and conquer lands in proportion to the troops provided by them.

2. "If Bāji Rao should be involved in Deccan warfare, the two brothers should defend, for at least two months, the fortress of Bundelkhand.

3. "King Chhatrasāl has looked upon Bāji Rao Sāheb as his son. Bāji Rao should therefore guard his (sons) as if they were his blood-brothers."<sup>2</sup>

Consequently Bāji Rao got Kālpi, Sāgar, Jhānsi, Sironj and Hirdenagar. Prof. Sinha observes, "The importance of their acquisition can never be exaggerated. They brought Bāji Rao into direct touch with the Doab, and with one of the imperial cities, Agra, to which Kālpi is so close. From this vantage point he was not only to dominate all Central India, but strike terror into Delhi and the Doab."<sup>3</sup>

1. For a detailed account of the history of this struggle see *ibid.*, pp. 113-17.

2. Kincaid and Pārasnis, *History of the Maratha People*, II, p. 225.

3. Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

Bāji Rao's march on Delhi, March 1737, has already been referred to. The Maratha activities from the death of Chhatra-sāl to that event need not be here described in detail. Their net result was that the Imperial generals being foiled one after another, the Emperor was obliged to recognise Bāji Rao's claim to *chauth* from Malwa and thirteen *lakhs* of rupees from the revenues of the territory south of the Chambal.<sup>1</sup> But the Marathas had already carried their depredations into most of Rajputana and the Doab, and to impress the Emperor of the helplessness of his condition, Bāji Rao had led his expedition to Delhi. The expected happened : the government of Malwa was conferred upon the Peshwa in addition to thirteen *lakhs* above mentioned. As a last resort, the Nizām was summoned to the rescue of the Empire. Towards the close of 1737 he made his last attempt to drive away the Maratha out of N. India. The result was his defeat at Sironj, and the convention of Durai Sarai (16th January, 1738) already described. When the Empire was smarting under this humiliation, a worse calamity was awaiting it in the north-west.

## V. TWO FATEFUL INVASIONS

The doom of the Empire which was weakened from within, as shown above, was sealed by two

A. Nādir Shāh, fateful invaders that came from without. 1739.

First Nādir Shāh and then Ahmad Shāh✓

Abdālī dealt the tottering Empire blows which it was ill-equipped to sustain. We have only to add a few words about the conditions in Rajputana and the Punjab at this time to enable the reader to visualise the situation that must have tempted these foreign attacks.

The Rajputs who at one time had been the bulwarks of the Empire, thanks to Aurangzeb's disastrous attitude towards them and the growing weakness of the later Mughal Emperors, now realised that

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1. For greater details see *ibid.*, pp. 126-28.

their interests lay elsewhere than in the Mughal Empire. Internally also, Rajputana was torn by dissensions between and within its three principal houses of the Sisodias, the Rathors and the Kachhwahs. "The disorder and destruction following from this contest for primacy," observes Sir Jadunath Sarkar, "were immensely multiplied by the entrance of another factor into Rajput politics in the middle of the 18th century, which ended only in the total ruin and humiliation of this noble race .... The Maratha and the Pindhari ravaged the land. Disorder, public plunder, economic ruin, and moral degradation were the chronic condition of Rajasthan from the declining years of Muhammad Shāh ...."<sup>1</sup> Bāji Rao's extortions in Rajputana were alike a lurid commentary on the weakness of the Rajputs and the strength of the Marathas. "After long higgling, the Mahārāna had to sign a treaty promising to pay annual tribute of Rs. 1,60,000, to cover which the Banhādā pargana was ceded to the Marathas."<sup>2</sup>

Though at this time the Punjab enjoyed peace owing to the strong and benevolent rule of its governor Zakariyā Khān I (1726-45), the province had suffered much on account of the ravages of plunderers like Isā Khān and Husain Khān Khesghi. Towards the N.-w. frontier were a number of intractable tribes who could be kept under control only when the power of the Mughal Emperors was strong both at Delhi and at Kabul. At the present time they afforded a gun-powder magazine that might burst out at any moment, and their depredations across the border gave a convenient excuse for Nādir Shāh to lead punitive expeditions into these shady regions.

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1. Sarkar, op. cit., pp. 234-45. For circumstances leading to Maratha intervention in Rajputana see *ibid.*, pp. 249-52.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 262. Similarly Rāja Durjan Sāl Hādā of Kotā had to pay to the Marathas a penalty of Rs. 10 lakhs for siding with the Imperialists. For Bāji Rao's extraordinary demands from the Mughal Emperor see *ibid.*, pp. 273-76.

## THE PERSIAN INVASION, 1738-9

Nādir Shāh was a Turkish adventurer who had established himself as the ruler of Persia in 1736. Persia had fallen on evil days and the Safawis had been supplanted by Afghan aggressors in 1722. Nādir Shāh, like Napoleon, though a foreigner himself, proved the saviour and then the champion of his adopted country.<sup>1</sup> This ambitious and successful adventurer carried the war into the home-lands of the Afghan usurpers and thereby came into clash with the Mughal governor of Kabul. Early in 1737 Nādir Shāh marched against Kandahār with 80,000 men. "So long as that centre of Afghan power was not destroyed, it would remain a menace to the safety of Persia and constantly disturb the peace and prosperity of Khurāsān. Moreover, without the conquest of Qandahār the full heritage of the Safawis could not be said to have come into his possession." The fort of Kandahār fell after a year's siege, March 1737 to March 1738. But Nādir Shāh treated the defeated Afghans very kindly: "released all the prisoners taken, bestowed pensions on the tribal chiefs, enlisted the clansmen in his army, and by transplanting the Ghilzais to Naishapur and other places in Khurāsān (the former homes of the Abdālis) and posting Abdāli chieftains as governors of Southern Afghanistan (Qandahār, Girishk, Bist and Zamindawar), kept his former enemies usefully employed in his service. *His policy was to tempt the other Afghan forts to surrender to him by creating a reputation for himself as a merciful enemy and liberal master, and to enlist the Afghan soldiers under his banners as devoted supporters of his projected conquests of Central Asia and India.*"<sup>2</sup>

We have not the space for a detailed statement of all the reasons for Nādir Shāh's invasions of  
Diplomacy. India. In the last analysis this must be

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1. For a fuller account of the earlier history of Nādir Shāh read Irvine, op. cit., pp. 315-20.

2. Ibid., pp. 319-20.



attributed to the ambitions of Nādir Shāh on the one hand, and the apparent weakness of the Mughal Empire on the other.<sup>1</sup> "Nādir Shāh," as Irvine points out, "was no mere soldier, no savage leader of a savage horde but a master of diplomacy and state-craft as well as of the sword. The profoundness of his diplomacy was no less remarkable than the greatness of his generalship in war and the wisdom of his policy to the vanquished after his victories in the field."<sup>2</sup>

1. The Mughal Emperors had long been in the practice of exchanging ambassadors with the Persian Court. This diplomatic usage was suddenly discontinued when Nādir Shāh ascended the throne. The new ruler of Persia resented this all the more because Muhammad Shāh had maintained friendly relations with Mīr Wais and his son Husain, the usurper of Kandahār, despite the latter's raid into Multan. Nādir Shāh duly informed the Mughal Court of his intended campaign in Kandahār and requested the Emperor not to give shelter to the Afghan fugitives in Kabul. The Emperor, no doubt, promised to do the needful, but failed to carry out his undertaking.

2. A second ambassador was sent to Delhi repeating the request, with no better result. In 1737, therefore, when hostilities had already begun in Kandahār, Nādir Shāh despatched a third envoy to the Mughal Court expecting an urgent and clear reply. But the Mughal sphinx was as silent as ever. A year passed, and matters crossed the frontiers of diplomacy—Nādir Shāh decided on invading India.

The governor of Kabul, Nāsir Khān, was not in the good books of the party in power at Delhi. His alarming reports about the impending danger were therefore discredited. He failed

Defenceless  
Frontier.

1. 'The train had long been laid,' writes Anandram Mukhlis, and from these negotiations sprang the spark that fired it . . . the true cause was the weakness of its (Hindustan's) monarchy—E. & D., op. cit., VIII, p. 77.

2. Irvine, loc. cit., p. 320.

to get even the minimum subsidies to maintain his army in a state of defence. The soldiers were ill-fed, ill-armed and five years in arrears of pay. In the words of Ghulam Husain, 'it was impossible for Nāsir Khān to prevent Nādir Shāh's entrance into India. The Government was rotten, the Emperor was powerless. No money was sent to maintain the administration in Afghanistan. The subahdār, therefore, sought his own comfort and lived at Peshawar, entrusting the fort of Kabul to a *qilādār* with orders to control and watch the passes leading into India.'<sup>1</sup>

The Punjab, as stated previously, was at this time under its governor, Zakariyā Khān. He was no doubt "a brave and active soldier" and a "good administrator;" but being a Turānī foreigner, he was hated by the Hindustānis at Court who enjoyed favour with the Emperor. His appeals for reinforcements in men and money, therefore fell on deaf ears. The gate-ways of India being thus in no state of defence, Nādir Shāh's invasion was both tempted and facilitated.

On 10th May 1738, the Persian entered Northern Afghanistan. Ghazni fell on the 31st. The Mughal governor fled, but the people were well treated by the conqueror. The Hazāras in the hills southwest of Ghazni resisted, and were ruthlessly destroyed. Nādir then advanced upon Kabul, which after a brief defence fell on the 19th June. Here he heard from his envoy at the Delhi Court that the Mughal Emperor would neither reply nor give him his *congè*. At this Nādir Shāh despatched an urgent letter of protest with a fast courier accompanied by some leading men of Kabul to offer explanation of the steps taken by the Persians.

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1. *Siyar*, i, 94 cited by Irvine, op. cit., p. 325.

Nāsir Khān, according to the *Tazkira*, described himself as 'a rose-bush withered by the blasts of autumn, while his soldiery were no more than a fetid pageant, ill-provided and without spirit'—E. & D., op. cit., VIII, p. 77.

In this he pointed out how the Emperor had broken faith with him, and explained that in punishing the rebellious Afghan he was really serving the best interests of the Mughal Empire. But as ill-luck would have it, the messengers were murdered within Mughal territory and Nādir Shāh had to march against the clans who were responsible for this outrage. He left Kabul on the 19th July, and Jalālābād surrendered on 7th September 1738. The men were massacred and the women taken captive by way of reprisals against the assassination of the envoys. Some time was then spent in regulating the administration of the conquered country, after which Nādir Shāh marched into the Punjab. As the prospects of his returning home seemed distant, he invested his eldest son, Mirza Raza Quli, as his deputy or regent in Persia (3rd November) and sent him back with a great force and suitable pomp.

For consideration of space we cannot dwell on all the details of Nādir Shāh's Indian campaign. To Karnāl. Peshawar was entered on 18th November. Wazirabad on the Chenab (60 miles N.-w. of Lahore) was crossed on the 8th January 1739. Zakariyā Khān, governor of the Punjab, finding resistance impossible surrendered on 12th January and thereby saved the city of Lahore from the wrath of the invader. He was made to pay a contribution of 20 *lakhs* of rupees and retained in his governorship. His son joined the train of the invader with 500 retainers "evidently as a hostage for his father's fidelity." Similarly, Nāsir Khān was restored to the viceroyalty of Kabul and Peshawar. "A Persian force was detached to guard the ferries and seize the boats on the rivers of the Punjab and see that travellers to and from the Persian army during its stay in India could easily pass. *Thus the flanks and rear of the invaders were completely secured.*"<sup>1</sup>

The situation is well described by Ānandrām Mukhlis in his *Tazkira*: 'Nādir Shāh was now in possession of all the

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1. Irvine, op. cit., pp. 330-33.

country as far as Attock, and Muhammad Shāh and his advisers could no longer remain blind to the danger that threatened them. They understood at length that *this was no ordinary foe against whom they had to contend, no mere plunderer who would be sated with the spoil of a province and then return to his own country, but a leader of unshakable resolution, who shaped his course with his sword.*' But the writer goes on to state how the Emperor and his nobles failed to do the needful and the country was despoiled by the invader : 'How to relate the ruin and desolation that overwhelmed this beautiful country ! Wazīrābād, Imānābād and Gujrat, towns which, for population might almost be called cities, were levelled with the earth. Nothing was respected, no sort of violence remained unpractised ; property of all kinds became the spoil of the plunderer, and women the prey of the ravisher.'<sup>1</sup>

'On the 15th of the month,' continues Ānandrām, 'the Shāh continued his march towards Shāh-Jahānābād. He advanced rapidly. Leaving his camp equipage at Shāhābād, (17 miles e. of Ambāla) on the 15th *Zil kada* he appeared in the neighbourhood of Karnāl (20 miles from Pānīpat), where Muhammad Shāh's army awaited his coming.'<sup>2</sup>

#### BATTLE OF KARNĀL, 1739

The fateful battle was fought on the 13th February 1739.<sup>3</sup> The following account of it by Ānandrām, who was an eyewitness, is valuable :—

'Near Karnāl flows through a broad plain a canal which issues from the Jamna river, near Mukhlispur, and continues its course to Shāh-Jahānābād. This place was found convenient for the encampment of the army. By degrees news was received of the progress of the enemy.....This disposition, which could hardly be considered worthy of an Emperor, was adopted partly to await the arrival of (Sādat Khān) Burhānu-l Mulk Bahādur, *Nāzim* of Oudh,

1. E. & D., op. cit., pp. 78-80.

2. Ibid., p. 81.

3. Dr. Srivastava gives a different date ; see *The First Two Nawābs of Oudh*, pp. 64-5.

who had been ordered to join the royal army. This nobleman, though suffering from sickness, advanced by forced marches at the head of 30,000 horsemen, and reached Karnāl, on the 14th of Zi-l *kada*. This addition to the strength of the army created universal joy, and all now thought victory certain.

'The Persians tried to intercept the army, which resulted in a premature clash. Muhammad Shāh, hearing of what was going on ordered *Amīru-l umara* (Khān Daurān) to reinforce the *Nāzim*. The *Amīr* represented that the army had not expected to fight that day, and that the soldiers were consequently quite unprepared; reinforcements could but add to the severity of the defeat. It was far better to delay a battle until the morrow, when the army could be disposed according to the rules of war, with advanced and rear guards, and their artillery on which everything depended in Indian warfare could be placed in the front. The struggle would then be one of comparative ease, and a little skill would insure an easy victory. The monarch was displeased with these objections, and addressed the *Amīr* as a *conceited idler*. But *Amīru-l umara* Bahādur was a chieftain who had the good of his master at heart; never had he been guilty of aught like disobedience, and now, arming himself and mounting an elephant, he gathered round him Muzaffar Khān Bahādur and a few horsemen, all that could be collected in that hour of bewilderment, and hastened to the support of the *Nāzim*. The struggle raged so fiercely that firearms and arrows were put aside, and swords and daggers were brought into play. Blood flowed from gaping wounds and crimsoned the combatants; the red *Kazalbash* caps had the appearance of poppies; a dense smoke hung over the field of battle.

'The heroic efforts of *Amīru-l umara* and his prodigies of valour could not prevail against the Persians, who far exceeded the Indians in number,<sup>1</sup> and had, moreover, the advantage of having been placed in position by the Shāh himself. The Mughals broke at length and fled; but *Amīru-l umara* maintained the combat until, mortally wounded in the face, he fell covered with glory<sup>2</sup>... Bur-

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1. Sir Jadunath Sarkar puts down the strength of the Persian army at 55,000 horse. "The number is nearest the truth." He also states "the total Indian fighting force at Karnāl could not have exceeded 75,000." But including the non-combatants it was very near a million men! See Irvine, *op. cit.*, pp. 337-38.

2. 'By his decease, Asaf Jāh Bahādur (Nizāmu-l Mulk) became *Mir Bakshī*. Officers were sent by the Emperor's order to seize the property of the late nobleman, which it would have been more generous to leave to the heirs.'—E. & D., *op. cit.*, p. 84.

hānu-l Mulk and Nisar Muhammad Khān Bahādur became prisoners .... Had the Emperor himself led his powerful army to the support of Burhānu-l Mulk, there would have been no cause to lament the loss of such a *sardār* as Amīru-l umara; and who can say that victory might not have smiled on his arms.<sup>1</sup>

'It is probable,' states the *Bayan-i Waki*, 'that if the army of Hindustan had been fully provided with artillery, the Persians would not have been able to oppose it.'<sup>2</sup>

The result of the defeat has been thus described by Ānand-rām himself : 1. 'The consequences of this disaster were lamentable; for the loss of baggage and the scarcity of supplies that soon prevailed (four rupees could hardly purchase a *sīr* of flour) totally deprived the soldiery of the little spirit they ever possessed.

2. 'The Persian Emperor sent a message offering to treat for peace; for, though so powerful, he was not one to overlook the advantages of negotiation. Wazīru-l mamalik Asaf Jāh was opposed to the proposition; but his argument did not prevail with the Emperor. On the 16th of the month Asaf Jāh Bahādur and Azīmu-llah Khān Bahādur were deputed to the Shāh, to conclude the negotiations; they returned to camp that evening.'<sup>3</sup>

'The next day Muhammad Shāh repaired in person to the Persian camp.... When they drew near, the Shāh himself came forth, and the etiquette usual between the Persian and Mughal Courts was faithfully observed. The two monarchs, holding one another by the hand, entered the audience-tents, and seated themselves

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1. Ibid., pp. 62-84.

2. Ibid., p. 83n, "The defeat of the Indians at Karnāl was due as much to their being outclassed in their weapons of war and method of fighting, as to their bad generalship."—Irvine, loc. cit., pp. 350-52.

3. According to other accounts Nizāmu-l Mulk conspired with Nādir Shāh to inveigle the Emperor into virtual imprisonment in the Persian Camp. See *Tarikh-i Hindī*, E. & D., op. cit., VIII, pp. 62-4; also Fraser, *Nadir Shah*, pp. 70-4. Cf. Irvine, op. cit., pp. 352-58 exculpating the Nizām.

side by side on a *mansad*. *It was as two suns had risen in the East, or as if two bright moons shed their light at one time !*

‘As Muhammad Shāh was unaccompanied by any one of his chiefs, the subject of conversation between the two Emperors has remained unknown. After this had lasted some time, a repast was prepared, the remains of which were given to Amīr Khān Bahādūr and the other noblemen. Nothing that courtesy and friendship require was omitted during the whole conference, which lasted a quarter of the day. These proceedings restored tranquillity to the mind of the soldiery ; all looked forward with joy to renewed plenty, to return to their beloved Shāh-Jahānābād and the society of friends ; *but fate smiled at these fond hopes, for more suffering and more bloodshed awaited them.*’

The dying *wazīr*, Khān Daurān Samsam-u-d daulah, had enjoined, “Never take the Emperor to March to Delhi. Nādir, nor conduct Nādir to Delhi, but send away that evil from this point by any means that you can devise.” But the inevitable came to pass. The unsuspecting Asaf Jāh and the Emperor Muhammad Shāh during their second visit to Nādir Shāh’s camp were surrounded and practically taken prisoners, it is alleged, at the instigation of Saadat Khān Burhānu-l Mulk.<sup>1</sup> Nādir Shāh compelled them to march

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1. Many details are omitted in this summary account. Nizām-u Mulk in his first visit to the Persian camp had negotiated for Nādir Shāh’s return on payment of Rs. 50 lakhs. On his return, by Nādir Shāh’s request, the Emperor paid a visit to the Persian camp, and was well received. After Muhammad Shāh’s retirement, Saadat Khān, owing to his jealousy towards the Nizām, suggested to Nādir Shāh that he should secure Nizām-u-l Mulk’s person as security for payment of the promised indemnity, and also that if they marched to Delhi, Nādir Shāh could extort more. The Nizām on his unsuspecting second visit was forcibly detained. This made the Emperor pay a second visit also. He too being secured was prevailed upon to go to Delhi together with the Persian host. This culminated in a tragedy.—Read Irvine, *op. cit.*, pp. 354-60. For the part played by Saadat Khān in this whole affair, see Srivastava, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-75.

to Delhi with the hope of extorting from the Emperor a larger indemnity than had been promised in the camp.<sup>1</sup> The Maratha ambassador at the Mughal Court, escaping from the embarrassing situation, with a sigh of relief exclaimed: "God has averted a great danger from me, and enabled me to escape with honour! The Chaghatai Empire is gone, Irānī Empire has commenced!"<sup>2</sup> Ānandrām too states, 'The Mughal monarchy appeared to all to be at an end.'<sup>3</sup>

The conqueror's justification was as follows:—

Addressing the Mughal Empire, he stated: 'It is strange that you should be so unconcerned and regardless of your own affairs, that notwithstanding I wrote you several letters, sent an Ambassador, and testified a friendship for you, your ministers should not think it proper to send me a satisfactory answer; and by reason of your want of command and discipline over your people, one of my Ambassadors, contrary to all laws, has been killed in your dominions.

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1. The conditions in the camp were heart-rending. According to Maratha eye-witness, 'Grain could not be procured even at 6 or 7 rupees the *seer*. The country was a desert, nothing could be had from the neighbouring villages... only six days after the battle, the supply of *ghee* had become entirely exhausted in the camp.'—*Ibid.*, p. 357. For a description of the march to Delhi, see Fraser, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-6. Fraser who wrote his account in 1742, and got his information from Mirzā Zaman (Secretary to Sarbuland Khān), also describes the scarcity in the Mughal camp which among other reasons must have been a potent factor in determining the Emperor's abject surrender. "In Mahammed Shāh's camp," he writes, "What grain was to be had, was sold from 2½ to 3 rupees per *seer*, and whoever went to Nādir Shāh's camp, were allowed to buy as much as they consumed there, but not to carry any away... at last the Emperor declared that affairs were now gone beyond his power and that he must do one of three things; to-morrow to march out and make one desperate push, to determine his fortune at once; or put an end to all thoughts and misery by a dose of poison; or else submit peaceably, to what terms may be imposed. The Emperor's inclination (tho' he did not then declare it) was for the last of these.—*Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

2. Rājwādē, vi, No. 131—cited by Sarkar (*Irvine, op. cit.*, p. 360).

3. E. & D., *op. cit.*, p. 87.



'Even when I entered your empire, you seemed under no concern for your affairs, nor so much as sent to ask who I was or what was my design. . . . Moreover, your predecessors were wont to take the *Jeziāh* from the infidels, and you in your reign have given it to them, having, in these 20 years, suffered the empire to be over-run by them.<sup>1</sup>

'But as hitherto the race of Temur have not injured or misbehaved towards the Seffī (Safawī) family, and the people of Persia, I shall not take the empire from you. Only, as your indolence and pride have obliged me to march so far, and that I have been put to an extraordinary expense, and my men, on account of the long marches, are much fatigued, and in want of necessaries; I must go to Delhi, and there continue some days, until the army is refreshed, and the *peishecush* (tribute), that Nizām al Muluck has agreed to (50 *lakhs* of rupees), is made good to me, after that, I shall leave you to look after your own affairs.'<sup>2</sup>

The Massacre at Delhi. The happenings related above had created a state of tense excitement and nervousness at Delhi. Even before the tragedy of Karnāl, according to Ānandrām : 'Many were the false reports circulated which there is no need to record here, and such was the state of the town, that, but for the vigilance of Kotwāl Hājī Fulad Khān, it must have been plundered, and the Persian army would have found the work done. The *Kotwāl*, no ordinary man, was at his post day and night; his exertions were unceasing, and, wherever there was an appearance of sedition, he seized and punished the guilty parties. The roads were infested with malefactors, and there was safety for none.'<sup>3</sup>

Under such conditions, "The fallen descendant of Bābar and Akbar rode into his capital on a portable throne *takht-i-*

1. The reference is to the Marathas. Nādir Shāh was a staunch *Sunni*, and hated all infidels. See Fraser, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-9.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 88-9.

3. E. & D., *op. cit.*, p. 86.

*rawan*) in silence and humility ; no band played, and no banners were carried before him."<sup>1</sup> Nādir Shāh followed him into the city, the next day (9th March 1739). The Emperor welcomed his conqueror, spread the richest carpets, cloth of gold, and other rare stuffs, on the ground for him to set his foot upon (*pa-andazi*). Nādir Shāh occupied Shāh Jahān's own palace-chambers near the Diwān-i-khās, while Muhammad Shāh lodged near the *deorhi* of the Asad Burj. [Ānandrām.] On this day the Emperor acted as the host and placed dinner before Nādir. The Persian army encamped, some round the fort, some on the bank of the Jamuna near the city, and some were quartered in houses throughout the city. [Ali Hazin, *Jahānkusha* 355.]<sup>2</sup>

For a time the prospect looked sanguine until it proved sanguinary: 'By a strange cast of the dice two monarchs who, but a short while before, found the limits of an empire too narrow to contain them both, were dwellers now within the same four walls!' But, as ill-luck would have it, a deep tragedy awaited the people of Delhi. It was heralded by the suicide of Sa'adat Khān Burhānu-l Mulk. Either his failure in raising the promised ransom or some other delinquency in the eyes of the conqueror, led to his severe reproof. The broken-hearted Nawāb "took diamond powder to save his name and honour and died about next morning."<sup>3</sup>

Nādir Shāh, according to all accounts, appears to have acted with great dignity and restraint. But the situation was such that, if all had gone well to the end, it would have been a great surprise. However, a clash occurred somewhere in the city, between the citizens and the army of occupation. It was the eve of the Holi festival for the Hindus, when excitement and intoxication are considered normal. 'The bad characters within the town,' says Ānandrām, 'collected in great

1. Sarkar, op. cit., p. 363.

2. Ibid., p. 363.

3. For a discussion on this point, read Dr. Srivastava, op. cit., p. 75.

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bodies, and, without distinction, commenced the work of plunder and destruction. A discharge of firearms and other missiles was continued throughout the night. The darkness of the night and the difficulty of recognising friend or foe were the cause of numbers of the Kazalbashi (Persians) being slain in the narrow lanes of the town. Scarce a spot but was stained with their blood.

'On the morning of the 11th (March 1739, Sunday) an order went forth from the Persian Emperor for the slaughter of the inhabitants (as an act of reprisal for the murder of the Persians). The result may be imagined; one moment seemed to have sufficed for universal destruction. *The Chandni chauk*, the fruit market, the *Daribah bazar*, and the buildings around the *Masjid-i-jama* were set fire to and reduced to ashes. The inhabitants, one and all were slaughtered. Here and there some opposition was offered, but in most places people were butchered unresistingly. The Persians laid violent hands on everything and everybody; cloth, jewels, dishes of gold and silver, were acceptable spoil. The author beheld these horrors from his mansion, situated in the *Wakilpura, Muhalla* outside the city, resolved to fight to the last if necessary, and with the help of God to fall at least with honour. But, the Lord be praised, *the work of destruction did not extend beyond the above-named parts of the capital*. Since the days of Hazrat Sahib-kiran Amir Timur, who captured Delhi and ordered the inhabitants to be massacred, up to the present time (A.H. 1151), a period of 348 years, the capital had been free from such visitations. The ruin in which its beautiful streets and buildings were now involved was such that the labour of years could alone restore the town to its former state of grandeur.'<sup>1</sup>

The loss in lives and treasure was indeed immense. No purpose would be served by dwelling either upon the horrors of the holocaust or counting the casualties. Neither age nor sex were respected by the

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1. E. & D., op. cit., p. 68.

furies let loose upon the city; the miscreants in some cases appear to have escaped leaving the innocent to be victimised. Several men and women were driven to insanity and suicide in their desperation. The streets and houses were glutted with corpses and soon the stench of these threatened to choke the living. The debris could be cleared and cleansed only by means of fire. The carnage lasted only for five hours, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. 'By degrees the violence of the flames subsided,' writes Ānandrām, 'but the bloodshed, the devastation, and the ruin of families were irreparable. For a long time the streets remained strewn with corpses, as the walks of a garden with dead flowers and leaves. The town was reduced to ashes, and had the appearance of a plain consumed with fire. All the regal jewels and property and the contents of the treasury were seized by the Persian conqueror in the citadel. He thus became possessed of treasure to the amount of 60 *lacs* of rupees and several thousand *ashrafs*; plate of gold to the value of one *kror* of rupees, and the jewels, many of which were unrivalled in beauty by any in the world, were valued at about 50 *krors*. The Peacock throne<sup>1</sup> alone, constructed at great pains in the reign of Shāh Jahān, had cost one *kror* of rupees. Elephants, horses, and precious stuffs, whatever pleased the conqueror's eye, more indeed than can be enumerated, became his spoil. In short, the accumulated wealth of 348 years changed masters in a moment.'<sup>2</sup>

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1. According to the *Jauhar-i Samsam*, the Peacock throne was 'bestowed on Nādir Shāh with his own munificent hand, as a parting present, by Muhammad Shāh. E. & D., op. cit., p. 89 n2. According to Fraser, the Peacock throne was broken to pieces by Sultan Ibrāhīm and Saiyid Abdullah, in 1720, to meet the expenses of the army.—*Nādir Shāh*, p. 30.

2. Ibid., p. 89. For a critical appraisal of details, read Sarkar, op. cit., pp. 370-74. "The entire population of Persia shared their King's prosperity. The revenue of that Kingdom was remitted for three years. The chiefs of the army were lavishly rewarded; the common soldiers received 18 months' pay together, one third of which was their due arrears, one third an advance, and the remaining one third as bounty [Bayan 53]. The camp-followers received Rs. 60 per head as salary and Rs. 100 as bounty [*Jaham* 361]." (Ibid., p. 374).

In the estimation of Fraser, 200,000 inhabitants of the Mughal Empire had fallen victims to the Persian invader ; and, in addition to 70 *krors* of rupees, Nādir Shāh carried away with him " 100 elephants, 7000 horses, 10,000 camels, 100 eunuchs, 130 writers, 200 smiths, 300 masons and builders, 100 stone-cutters, and 200 carpenters."<sup>1</sup>

A daughter of " Iesdan Bakhsh the son of Kām Bakhsh and grandson of Aurangzeb " was given in marriage to 'Nesr Allah Mīrza, Nādir Shāh's son. On Tuesday night the marriage was consummated. Mahommed Shah made the young princess a present of jewels to the value of 50,000 rupees, and in ready money 50,000 more."<sup>2</sup>

Finally, Nādir Shāh read the following homily to the Mughal Emperor :—

' In the first place, you must seize all the omra's jaguirs, and pay each of them, according to his mansab and rank, with ready money out of the treasury. You are to allow none to keep any forces of his own, but you yourself are constantly to keep 60,000 chosen horsemen, at sixty rupees per month : every ten men to have *dehbashī* (officer over ten men), every ten *dehbashis* one *sudīval* (officer over 100), and every ten *sudivals* one *hazari*. You ought to be well acquainted with the merits of each : his name, family and nation (race), not allowing any of them—officers, soldiers or others—to be idle or inactive ; (and) when an occasion may require, despatch a sufficient number, under the command of one whom you can trust for conduct, courage and fidelity, and when that business is over, recall them immediately, not letting any person to stay too long in command, for fear of bad consequences. *You are more particularly to beware of Nizāmu-l-Mulk, whom, by his conduct, I find to be full of cunning and self-interested, and more ambitious than becomes a subject.*'

The reporter of the above, Mīrza Zouman, goes on to narrate : 'Mahommed Shāh knowing these advices proceeded from good-will, was very thankful, and desired him, as his empire depended on him, that he would appoint those whom

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1. *Ibid.*, pp. 119-20.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

he thought most deserving of the principal posts. Nādir Shāh said, "That will not be at all for your interest ; such officers will have little deference for you in my absence ; when I am gone, dispose of every post to those whom you think most worthy, and should they or any of them rebel, upon the first advice, I will send a person to chastise them ; if it be necessary I'll send forces ; or on occasion, I can be with you myself, in 40 days, from Kandahar ; but upon all events do not reckon me far off."<sup>1</sup>

Nādir Shāh before his departure on 5th May 1739, after a stay of 57 days placed the crown of Hindustan on the head of Muhammad Shāh and tied a jewelled sword round his waist ; and the Emperor gratefully declared (or was gracefully made to declare) : " As the generosity of the Shāhan Shāh has made me a second time master of a crown and a throne and exalted me among the crowned heads of the world, I beg to offer as my tribute the provinces of my Empire west of the river Indus, from Kashmir to Sindh, and in addition the subahs of Tattha and the ports subordinate to it."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the most vital part of the Mughal Empire, viz., the Trans-Indus provinces including Afghanistan, was now finally lost to the descendants of Bābur. " A considerable territory east of the Indus had also been seized by Nādir by right of victory over the local subahdārs before the battle of Karnāl, and his right to their revenue was not disputed, though they continued to be governed by Muhammad Shāh's officers. The governor of Lahore now signed an agreement to send Nādir 20 lakhs of Rupees a year on this account, to remove the reason for any Persian garrison being left east of the Indus."<sup>3</sup>

It must be here recorded with pride that, when Nādir Shāh wanted to acknowledge his gratification at Zakariyā

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1. Ibid., p. 112.

2. Sarkar, op. cit., p. 374.

3. Ibid., pp. 374-75.

Khān's (governor of Lahore) conduct during the invasion, by granting whatever he might desire, the latter *nobly begged of the conqueror for nothing more than the release of the Indian captives he was carrying away to Persia!*<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, it may be stated that, ever since Nādir Shāh's entry into Delhi, the *khutbah* (the emblem of sovereignty) had been read in the name of the conqueror. Now he graciously declared that henceforth all *farmāns* should be again issued in Muhammad Shāh's name, as also the reading of the *khutbah* and the issuing of coinage. Finally, Nādir Shāh also sent off four *farmāns* of his own to Nādir Jang, Nāsir-ud-daulah, Rājah Sāhu and Bāji Rao, urging them to respect the settlement he had made and to obey Muhammad Shāh in future.<sup>2</sup>

Nādir Shāh did not live long to reap the fruits of his triumphs. Eight years after his Indian invasion he died by the hand of an assassin.<sup>3</sup> We must now turn to the other invader: Ahmad Shāh Abdālī or Dur-rāni. He was one of Nādir Shāh's chief lieutenants. Of him the conqueror had said, "I have not found in Iran, Turan, or Hind, any man equal to Ahmad Abdālī<sup>4</sup> in capacity and character." This estimate of him was justified by Abdālī's successes. After the death of Nādir Shāh he established himself as independent

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1. Ibid., p. 376.

2. *Jahanuksha*, 361-62, Rājwādē, vi, 167, Ali Hazin, 301, Bayan, 57, and Anandrām, 803, cited, *ibid.*, p. 375.

3. This took place on 9th June 1747 at Kuchān in the N. E. corner of Khurasan. It was the outcome of Nādir Shāh's deterioration into a ferocious tyrant. See Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I, pp. 196-200.

4. Abdālī's original home appears to have been in Multān. His grand-father had migrated to Herat about 1717 A.D. (Srivastava, *op. cit.*, p. 115). He was called *Abdāl* (or a man of renunciation and communion with God) by his spiritual preceptor Khwajah Abu Ahmad *Abdāl* of the Chisti order. *Duri-i-durrāni* (or 'Pearl among pearls') was the title he had himself assumed after his success. (Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 200 n.)

ruler of Kandahar and Kabul, and consequently laid claim to Western Punjab as the rightful successor of Nādir. To make good this claim he led successive expeditions into Hindustan which culminated in the great disaster (for us) at Pānīpat in 1761. The situation in Hindustan leading up to this catastrophe is too complicated to be satisfactorily unravelled within the space at our disposal. We shall, therefore, here touch upon only a few of the most salient features to enable the reader to visualise the circumstances attending the extinction of the Mughal Empire. Although, as we have said in the Introduction, the last descendant of Bābur to bear the name and wear the crown of the Mughal Emperor was Bahādur Shāh II, who died in exile at Rangoon in 1862—a full century after the Third Battle of Pānīpat (1761)—the Empire might be considered to have been truly extinguished with the murder of Alamgīr II, on 28th November, 1759. His son Ali Gauhar, was at that time away from the capital and although he proclaimed himself Emperor Shāh Alam at Allahabad, he was not destined to return to Delhi except as the protégé of new powers (the Marathas and the English) that were contending for the mastery of his Empire. Meanwhile a puppet was raised to the throne, as Shah Jahan III,<sup>1</sup> by the rebellious *wazīr*, Gāziu-d din Fīrūz Jang ;<sup>2</sup> but he never counted for a legitimate successor. This revolution was precipitated to a very large extent by the invasions of Ahmad Shāh Abdālī, which began in 1748 and ended in 1761.

One writer has said, "The Mogul rule began and ended on the field of Pānīpat."<sup>3</sup> The implications of this statement must be made clear. In the first battle of Pānīpat Ibrāhīm Lodi,

Significance of  
Pānīpat.

1. *The Cambridge Shorter History of India* (1934). p. 475. A grandson of Kām Bakhsh, the youngest son of Aurangzeb. The *Ibrat-nāma* calls him Shāh Jahān II.—E. & D., op. cit., p. 243.

2. The *wazīr* also declared Shāh Alam a rebel. See Sarkar, op. cit., II, p. 166.

3. Kamdar and Shah, *A History of the Mogul Rule in India*, p. 266.



the Afghan ruler of Delhi, was overthrown, and Bābur laid the foundation of the Mughal Empire in India. In the second battle of Pānīpat, Akbar overthrew Hemu, the Hindu general of an Afghan King, who had set himself up as a new Vikramāditya at Delhi; but the real overthrow was not of Hindu power but of the Afghans. Throughout Mughal history the fallen and dispossessed Afghans were trying to regain their lost dominion in India; but they could never regain the capital, Delhi, the real political centre of gravity. Now, after a little over two centuries (1556-1761), it might appear that, Mughal power in India was really and finally extinguished even at Delhi as the result of an *Afghan* triumph on the gory field of Pānīpat. But it is not to be forgotten that the third battle of Pānīpat was *not* fought between the Mughal ruler of Delhi and the Afghan invader, but between the Marathas and Abdāli. The crushing defeat was therefore a disaster for the Marathas and not for the Emperor: if anything it was a triumph also for the Mughal Empire, because both Abdāli, Shujāu-d daula and the Rohillas, were to all appearances the champions of the Mughal (Muslim?) Empire against the immediate chances of founding a Maratha (Hindu) Empire at Delhi. After his victory at Pānīpat, Ahmad Shāh Abdāli retired from Hindustan recognising Shāh Alam as the Emperor of Delhi. But here we are only dealing with *names* and not *realities*. The reality was that, as stated above, there was no Emperor at Delhi after the murder of Alamgīr II in November 1759. This was the work of the rebellious *wazīr*, Gāzīu-d din Fīroz Jang, in alliance with the Marathas. As a result, Abdāli occupied Delhi by way of challenge to the revolutionaries. The attempt of the Marathas to oust the Afghan from Delhi and the Punjab ended in a catastrophe, *to themselves and not to the Mughal Empire: the latter had already ceased to exist in 1759*. What Pānīpat decided was that *the Marathas were not to rule India*.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Mr. Sardesai has argued with some reason that the Pānīpat disaster "did not materially affect the Maratha fortunes," and that

Abdālī's sudden withdrawal and recognition of Shāh Alam showed that his purpose in invading India *was not to re-establish Afghan rule at Delhi*.<sup>1</sup> The battle of Plassey in 1757 and Buxar in 1764 also indicated that *not even a subahdār or the wazīr of the Mughal Empire was to succeed to his heritage of power*. Destiny had prepared an alien race for this important rôle. How this happened will become clear from what follows.

Ahmad Shāh Durrāni, like Bābur, led altogether five expeditions into Hindustan, the fifth ending with a victory on the field of Pānīpat; but the difference between the two was that the former, unlike the latter, did not follow up his triumph. The situation in India was somewhat similar on the two occasions : in 1526 the Empire of Delhi had shrunk to a kingdom, as in 1761 ; it was moreover very much distracted and weakened by internal squabbles and external dangers from its own nominal vassals ; a Hindu power, in both instances, was

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the Marathas "made good their fortunes" ten years later when the next Peshwa and his spirited generals including Mahādji Sindia brought the legitimate Emperor to Delhi and installed him on his hereditary throne under Maratha protection, thus fulfilling *to the letter* the sacred undertaking of 1752, and *indirectly* also the grand ideal of Hindu-Pad-Pādshāhi for which the Peshwas had been striving from the beginning of their regime." But even he admits that at Pānīpat "the field was made clear for the third power, viz., the English. This is amply corroborated by the easy manner in which only four years after Pānīpat, Clive obtained the Diwāni of Bengal, i.e., practically the mastery of that rich province and consequently of India. Bengal had then been subjugated by the Bhonsla of Nagpur and *had the Peshwa been victorious at Pānīpat, one feels certain that neither the Bhonsla nor the Peshwa would have allowed Bengal to slip out of their hands so easily*, leaving the situation for Clive to manage as best as he could under the prevailing circumstances." (Italics mine.)—*The Modern Review*, September 1933, pp. 273-74.

1. Kāshirāj Pandit attributes the retreat of Ahmad Shāh Abdālī to the mutiny of his soldiers, as it had happened before with Alexander. Otherwise, he indicates, "He wished to seize on the Empire of Hindostan." But it is difficult to accept this statement in the light of Bābur's resolute action under exactly similar conditions. If Abdālī was really determined he could have overcome the opposition of his army. (See Rawlinson, *Pānīpat*, pp. 50-2.)

threatening to eclipse the Delhi suzerain (the Rajput confederacy under Rāna Sanga in the case of the Lodis, and the Maratha confederacy under the Peshwa in the case of the Mughals the latter being by far the more formidable); the foreigner, under similar circumstances was invited as an ally to support internal contentions; but, as ill-luck would have it, the foreigner came to dominate over everything and everybody.

The differences were: Bābur came to stay, Abdāli was content with a military triumph and the booty it brought him; Bābur fought against the ruler of Delhi, Abdāli against the Marathas, the virtual enemies and doubtful allies of the Emperor; Bābur had been invited by Rāna Sanga (among others) the leader of the Hindu confederacy, Abdāli's principal adversary was the Maratha who—far from co-operating with the parties inviting him—took the main responsibility of fighting the enemies of the country.

We have no room for all details of the expeditions, but shall record here only such facts as reveal the situation in India. It will be remembered that the Punjab, west of the Indus, had been annexed to Nādir Shāh's dominion with a further claim on the revenues of a part of Eastern Punjab as well. Abdāli started to reassert these rights, and rallying all the Afghans conquered Peshawar and marched on Lahore. Hayātullah, one of the sons of the great Zakariyā Khān, now his successor (or really usurper of the *subah*) had been one of the first to invite Abdāli to India to support his usurpation of his elder brother Yahiyā's deputy-governorship.<sup>1</sup> But when the

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1. For a detailed account of these squabbles over the *subadārī* of the Punjab, after Zakariyā's death, see Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I, pp. 191-96. "The civil war between Yahiya and Hayātullah rent the government of the Punjab into two, and made that province too weak to resist a foreign invader." "All these circumstances conspired 'to destroy the peace and prosperity which the just rule of Zakariyā Khān had given to the Punjab . . . . ' Disorder

invader actually came, blazing his path with fire and loot, Hayātu-llah appeared to have felt the enormity of his blunder, and attempted resistance when it was too late. Under the circumstances he had to bow

Low before the blast,  
And let the legions thunder past.

"The capture of Lāhor more than doubled the strength of Ahmad. Not only did he gain immense wealth in the form of the city's ransom (Rs. 22 lakhs immediately paid) and the property of the governor and his family, but he was thus enabled to equip himself with all the imperial artillery and military stores in the fort, of which he had brought none from Peshawar. Further, he seized all the horses and camels that he could find in and near Lāhor, mounted his Afghan footmen on the horses and his swivel-guns on the camels, and in this way added five or six thousand hardy men to his mobile division, with a good number of rapidly portable light artillery."<sup>1</sup>

At such a moment of grave crisis the Mughal Emperor and his Court did not seem to have recovered from the paralytic stroke of Nādir Shāh's invasion. As the *Tarikh-i Ahmad Shāh* records: 'The condition of the country after the departure of Nādir Shāh was worse than before.' The chronicler's description of the situation is well worthy of reproduction:—

'Instead of being impressed with the importance of attending to the affairs of his kingdom, and turning his earnest attention as became an Emperor towards the management of the country, Muhammad Shāh from the commencement of his reign, displayed the greatest carelessness in his government, spending all his time in sport and play. This neglect on the part of the Sovereign was

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broke out. Everywhere lawless men, plunderers and adventurers, who had so long kept themselves in hiding, now came out of their holes and began to desolate the realm .... On one side the Rājah of Jammu rebelled, and on the other the Sikhs began to cause tumult and trouble." (Ānandrām, 289.) Ibid.

1. Ibid., pp. 210-11.

speedily taken advantage of by all the *amirs* and nobles, who usurped possession of *subas* and *parganas*, and appropriated to themselves the revenues of those provinces, which in former days were paid into the Royal treasury, and mounted to several *krors* of rupees. *From these provinces not one farthing found its way into the Royal chest*; but a small revenue was still derived from those few *khalisa parganas* which yet remained faithful to their allegiance. *As the Royal treasury became gradually emptied, the Emperor's army was reduced to great straits, and at last entirely broken up*; whilst the nobles of the land, who in the time of former sovereigns could never have got together such an amount of wealth, or so large a force, now amassed large sums of money from their own *jāgirs*, and from those Government lands of which they had seized possession, and from the *jāgirs* of others, a twentieth portion of which they did not give to the rightful owners. With this wealth they were able to keep up an immense army, with which the Emperor was unable to cope. Thus the Emperor found himself more circumscribed than his nobles, upon whom he, in fact, became dependent, and was unable to depose or displace any one of them.<sup>1</sup>

However, by a mere fluke of fortune, belated though the Imperial attempt was to withstand Ahmad Shāh's invasion, the enemy was beaten at the battle of Manupur, on 11th March, 1748. The Imperial army was under the nominal command of Prince Ahmad assisted by the *wazir* Kamaru-din Khān and Safdar Jang, the successor of Sa'adullah Khān, Nawāb of Oudh. Abdālī's precipitate retreat after this accidental defeat was due to an error of judgment arising from a miscalculation of his foe's fitful strength.<sup>2</sup> However, this was a stroke of good fortune, which saved the Empire for the time-being. The Mughals considered discretion the better part of valour and dared not follow up the victory with a pursuit. If they had done so, Abdali would probably have thought twice before he ventured into India again. But both sides exaggerated each others vantage !

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1. This, in fact, is the description of the conditions obtaining on the eve of Nādir Shāh's invasion; after it, as the writer has pointed out, the situation became only worse.—E. & D., op. cit., pp. 104-5.

2. See Sarkar, op. cit., pp. 220-33.

The great loss of the victors in this battle was the death of the *wazir* Kamaru-d din Khān. Its effect upon the Emperor Muhammad Shāh was like that of the death of Vishwās Rao and Sadāshiv Rao Bhāu upon the Peshwa Bālāji, thirteen years later at the battle of Pānīpat : the Emperor did not survive the shock. Whatever Kamaru-d din's failings might have been during his wazirship, the way he met his death is worthy to be immortalised. He was mortally wounded and, when he realised this, he called his son Muinu-l Mulk from the trenches, and said, "*My son, it is all over with me. But the Emperor's work is not yet finished. Before this news spreads, do you quickly ride out and deliver the assault.*" It was a very critical moment in the flux of the battle. The son rose equal to the situation. He suppressed his filial tears, buried his father hurriedly in his blood-stained clothes, and cried to his captains : "Advance with me or stand back from the battle as you like it, but do not take to flight during the fighting and thereby ruin our cause. I myself shall fight on till my death."<sup>1</sup>

Muin had earned his laurels and was rewarded with the *Subahdāri* of Lahore ; Nāsir Khān<sup>2</sup> was sent to Kabul. Prince Ahmad returned to find his father dead, and promptly ascended the throne as Emperor Ahmad Shāh. In fact, the news of Muhammad Shāh's death had reached the Mughal camp at Pānīpat, and as it had happened with Akbar after the battle of Sirhind (when, on receiving the news of Humāyūn's death at Agra, Bairam Khān effected his coronation on an improvised throne at Kalanaur), so now Ahmad's impromptu coronation was effected by Safdar Jang, a Persian minister who aspired to play the rôle of a second Bairam Khān. Safdar Jang indeed became the *wazir*, tried to be his masters' master, and almost suffered the fate of Bairam Khān. He was forced to retire from court politics, and died soon after, as we shall presently see.

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1. *Bayan*, 233 ; cited *ibid.*, pp. 223-24.

2. He was already governor of Kabul, but had been put to flight by Abdālī.

Muhammad Shāh had come to the throne at the age of 17, in 1719. He, therefore, reigned for 28 years, and died a natural death at the age of 45. Ahmad Shāh was 22 at his accession, but "the Emperor's mind inclined to the society of vulgar persons (only), and he practised evil deeds which made him a shame to the country." Under the evil direction of his depraved mother Udham Bai and her shameless paramour Javid Khān, the administration grew weak and degraded; "the pillars of the State were daily shaken; (and) the Emperor never inquired about the realm, the soldiery, or the treasury,—the three foundations of an Empire." He buried himself, as we have seen earlier, in his *harem*, for weeks together, and indulged in all kinds of puerilities and frivolities. "Never since Tīmūr's time," laments a Delhi historian, "had a eunuch exercised such power in the State (as did Javid); hence the Government became unsettled. The hereditary peers felt humiliated by having to make their petitions through a slave and to pay court to him before any affair of State could be transacted."<sup>1</sup> After a fatuous reign of six years, Emperor Ahmad Shāh was dethroned by one of his officers, Imādu-l Mulk, and imprisoned and blinded by formal order of his successor Alamgir II, who was placed on the throne in 1754. It is pathetic to note that when the fallen Emperor cried in his agony of heart and thirst for water to drink, Saifullah, the officer in charge, held up to his lips some water put in a pot-sherd lying in the dust: the King of kings of an hour ago was glad to drink from it!<sup>2</sup>

The next two invasions of Ahmad Shāh Abdālī took place before the palace revolution above referred to. Before his defeat and flight, according to the *Tarikh-i Ahmad Shāhi*, Abdālī had sent 'a camel, with melons, apples, etc., and a letter to the Prince (Ahmad Shāh), desiring peace, and stipulating that if

1. For a full and vivid picture of the times read Sarkar, op. cit., pp. 328-59.

2. Ibid., p. 544.

the Emperor would leave him Kabul and Thatta, which Nādir Shāh had given him, and all the gold which Nādir Shāh had brought from Delhi, he would evacuate the country.<sup>1</sup> But this overture, as we have seen, proved futile, Abdālī now returned to retrieve his fortune. Mīr Mannu or Muinu-l Mulk, son of the *wazī* Kamaru-d din Khān, who had distinguished himself in the first fight against Abdālī, was then the *subahdār* of Lahore. He had proved himself a capable governor, but unfortunately he received no support from Delhi. 'Ahmad Khān's (Abdālī's) forces, separating in all directions, laid waste the villages and fields on every side, till they arrived in the neighbourhood of Lahore, destroying all the country in its proximity. . . . The news of Ahmad Khān's attack speedily reached the ears of the Emperor and the *wazīr*, but no one thought of sending troops to assist Muinu-l Mulk,' says the *Tarikh-i Ahmad Shāhi*; on the contrary, the *wazīr* was not a little pleased to hear of his embarrassment. At last news arrived that Muinu-l Mulk had, according to the advice and instructions of the Emperor, ceded to Ahmad Afghan the four *Mahals* of Lahore, viz. Sialkot, Imanabad, Parsarur, and Aurangabad, which had formerly belonged to the ruler of Kabul. Nāsir Khān was appointed to manage the four 'mahals and send the yearly revenue to Kabul. Ahmad Khān, being perfectly satisfied with this arrangement, quitted the Punjab for Kabul, and Muinu-l Mulk returned to Lahore.<sup>2</sup>

But Mīr Mannu would not continue to yield the tribute which had been exacted from him under duress. This brought the Durrānī on him for a second time in 1750-51. 'Ahmad came by forced marches to Lahore, and began to devastate the country (again). . . . Mīr Mannu marched back in alarm to the city, barricaded all the streets, and strengthened the interior defences. Every day there were skirmishes, till at last the supply of provisions was closed on all sides. There was such a dearth of corn and grass that with the utmost difficulty two *sirs* of wheat flour could be had for a rupee, to say nothing of rice. To procure for horses other forage than rushes or house-thatch was next to an impossibility. This obliged Mīr Mannu and his army to take the field.'<sup>3</sup>

The Emperor under the direction of his IRĀNĪ *wazīr* (Safdar Jang) did worse than nothing. 'The nobles and *mirzas* of Delhi

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1. E. & D. op. cit., p. 108.

2. Ibid., p. 115. Muhammad Aslam's *Farhatun Nasirīn* confirms the account—Ibid., p. 166.

3. Ibid., pp. 166-67.



hoped that Mir Mannu (who was a TURĀNĪ) might be destroyed, and after this desirable event they would take measures against Abdāli(!). They would thus extirpate the thorn which the *Turānīs* had planted in their side.<sup>1</sup> Pursuing this suicidal policy, a rival had been appointed governor of Multan who was promised the *subahdāri* of Lahore if he should succeed in getting rid of Muinu-l Mulk. Under these circumstances even the lion-hearted Mannu could do little. He was defeated and obliged 'to kiss the threshold of the Durrāni.' The honourable way in which he did this is worthy of record. Like Porus before Alexander the Great, Muinu-l Mulk addressed the Durrāni thus: "*If you are a shop-keeper sell me (for a ransom), if you are a butcher kill me, but if you are a Padisha then grant me your grace and pardon.*"

Like Alexander also the Afghan conqueror had the magnanimity to appreciate this courageous bearing of the vanquished. He embraced Muin, called him his son (*Farzand*), and bestowed on him a *khilat* (robe of honour), and aigrette for the crest, and the very turban from his head!<sup>2</sup> Like Zakariyā Khān before Nādir Shāh, Muinu-l Mulk pleaded mercy also for his starving people, and Ahmad Shāh at his request released his Punjābī captives, and posted his provost-marshalls in the city to prevent his soldiers from robbing or maltreating the citizens. Next day a dinner was given to Abdāli and his troops by the grateful Muinu-l Mulk and the *subahs* of Lahore and Multan were ceded to the Afghans. This was further confirmed by the Emperor who in effect agreed to pay an annual tribute of 50 *lakhs* of rupees to the Durrāni: Mir Mannu was reinstated in his charge, but now as a virtual vassal of Abdāli.

A complication soon arose out of an agreement between the *wazīr* Safdar Jang and the Marathas. The latter since the time of Bāji Rao I had become by far the most conspicuous power to reckon with in North India. Whether it was the threat of an invasion of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa by the Bhonsle of

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1. Ibid., 166.

2. *Miskin and Husaini*, cited by Sarkar, op. cit., p. 433

Nagpur (who was a rival of the Peshwas), or a conflict between the Rohilas and the Nawāb of Oudh, an internal dispute about succession in Rajputana, or again the fear of a Durrāni invasion in the Punjab, it was the Peshwa and his Maratha confederates that were looked up to as saviours. Thus the Peshwāi Marathas were called into Bengal by Ali Verdi Khān in 1743 to save his province from the Nāgpuri Marathas.<sup>1</sup> This resulted in the annual grant, by the Emperor Muhammad Shāh to Rāja Shāhu, of 25 *lakhs* of rupees as the *chauth* of Bengal and 10 *lakhs* as that of Bihar, promised in November 1746.<sup>2</sup> In 1751 likewise, Safdar Jang the *wazīr*, finding himself unequal to the task of suppressing the Bangash and Rohilla Afghans,<sup>3</sup> who had become a menace both to the Empire and to his own *subah* of Bihar, summoned the Marathas to his assistance. This alliance, originally effected to meet a local problem, soon ripened into what appeared to be a more formidable coalition between the Marathas and the Empire as represented by the *wazīr*. The treaty embodying this was made during the third Abdālī invasion of the Punjab (1751-52). Its terms were as follows :

1. The Peshwa agreed to protect the dwindling Empire from all its enemies, whether foreign invaders like Abdālī or domestic rebels like the Jāts, Rohillas, or the Sikhs.

2. Fifty *lakhs* of rupees were to be paid to the Peshwa for this : 30 *lakhs* for driving out Abdālī and the the rest for other services.

3. In addition the Peshwa was granted the *chauth* of the Punjab and Sindh including the *mahals* of Sialkot, Pasrur, Gujrat, Aurangabad, and the districts of Hisar, Sambhal, Muradabad and Badaun.

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1. See Sarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 94. ff.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 127. Complications arising from this need not be dealt with here.

3. For a fuller account of these see *ibid.*, pp. 41-66, 374-404. Srivastava, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-112 ; 142-195.

4. The Peshwa was also to be appointed Governor of Ajmer (including the *faujdāri* of Narnaul) and Agra (including the *faujdāri* of Mathura).

5. The above charges were to be administered strictly according to the laws of the Mughal Empire and nominally subject to the Emperor.

6. And finally, the Maratha *sardārs* were to be enlisted in the ranks of the Imperial *mansabdārs*.<sup>1</sup>

This, as Sir Jadunath Sarkar points out, practically placed the Marathas "in possession of the north-western frontier province, though under the Emperor's suzerainty, so that it would be their interest to resist Abdāli, and the Emperor would be relieved of the task of defending it . . . Safdar Jang even talked of reconquering Kabul with Maratha help." Although the scheme did not materialise immediately, it sufficiently indicated the importance of the Marathas and foisted their gaze upon the province of their doom.

The obstacle in the way of their realisation was the existence of a party at Court opposed to the Irāni *wazīr* Safdar Jang, during whose absence from Delhi, was precipitated the agreement with Abdāli already referred to above. By this the Punjab had already been yielded up to the Durrāni (1751-52). Under these circumstances, Safdar Jang's inability to fulfil his agreement with the Marathas brought matters to a head at Delhi. The eunuch Javid Khān the dictator at Court was naturally held responsible by the *wazīr*. Failing all other remedies, Safdar Jang determined upon and effected his murder on 27th August 1752.<sup>2</sup> This political assassination and the domination of the *wazīr* over the Emperor and his Court only

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1. Srivastava, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-201; Sarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 360-62. The latter points out, "This was an anticipation of the policy which Wellesley adopted when he made the English hold the ceded districts along the w. border of Oudh, so as to face Sindhia's dominions and bar the path of Maratha advance into the Company's territory."

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 364-74.

made the position worse for Safdar Jang ; it increased the number of his enemies. To strengthen himself, Safdar Jang quartered his Maratha allies round about Delhi, and the two together established a tyranny that became increasingly intolerable to all. " The Emperor (Ahmad Shāh) keenly resented being reduced to the condition of a captive cut off from free intercourse with society by Safdar Jang's partisans. Such high-handedness on the part of the prime minister could have been borne if his administration had been a success, the revenue secured, and the enemy kept out. But a dictator under whom the capital was insulted by a permanent camp of Marathas at its gates, the provinces passed out of the Central Government's control, and the royal house-hold officials and troops all starved, was sure to provoke a universal revolt against his unwholesome domination."<sup>1</sup>

From the close of 1752 there were persistent reports of a fresh Durrāni incursion. On 5th February 1753, an envoy from Ahmad Shāh Abdālī actually presented himself at the Court of the Mughal Emperor demanding the 50 *lakhs* promised to him in 1751-52. The baffled Emperor consulted his courtiers who only taunted : " The Marathas have undertaken to fight Abdālī. You have given them the two provinces of Agra and Ajmer, and the *chauth* of all the 24 *subahs*. You have paid them money and placed all authority in their hands. Ask *them* what should be done now."

This precipitated a crisis at Court. The party in opposition to Safdar Jang cried for his dismissal. A civil war ensued, in the course of which the jats as the allies of the *wazīr* plundered Old Delhi : ' lakhs and lakhs were looted, the houses were demolished, and all the suburbs and Churania and Wakilpura were rendered totally lampless.<sup>2</sup> The capital and its suburbs, when the Afghan was knocking at their gates,

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1. Ibid, p. 460.

2. Ibid., p. 481.

were turned into a Field of Mars, not for fighting against the external enemy, but on account of the internal quarrels between the Emperor and his insubordinate officers. At last peace was restored through the mediation of Madho Singh the Rājah of Jaipur, to whom the helpless Emperor appealed in the hour of distress. The mediator was rewarded with the restoration of Rantambhor which the Rajput had begged for in vain from Muhammad Shāh. Safdar Jang, dismissed from his office as *wazīr* retired to his *subah* of Oudh where he died on 5th October, 1754.<sup>1</sup>

“This final withdrawal of Safdar Jang from the capital,” observes Sarkar, “completed the process by which the ablest and most experienced of the elder peers, who could possibly have reformed the administration if properly supported by the Emperor, gave up the task in despair and retired to some distant province where they could at least achieve something really great and good, though in a smaller sphere. The practical independence of these provincial governors and their scornful unconcern with the affairs of Delhi, in Bengal, Oudh, and the Deccan, coupled with the Maratha seizure of Gujarat and Malva, and the Afghan annexation of the Punjab, contracted the Empire of India into a small area round Delhi and a few districts of the modern U. P., where small men only fought and intrigued for small personal ends.”<sup>2</sup>

The retirement of Safdar Jang, however, brought no peace either to the Emperor or to his capital. The parties changed, but the civil strife continued. The hero of the triumph against Safdar Jang had been Imādu-l Mulk, a grandson of Nizāmu-l Mulk. He was then the *bakhshī* or the pay-master of the Imperial troops. On the dismissal of Safdar Jang, Intizāmu-d daulah, uncle of Imād and leader of the Turani

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1. Srivastava, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-50.

2. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 505.

party, had become the *wazīr*. Now the two, uncle and nephew, the *wazīr* and the *bakhshī*, quarrelled for supremacy over the Emperor. The latter, being the more impetuous and capable, triumphed in the end over his self-indulgent rival. The Emperor, had naturally sided with his *wazīr*; but when his plans were foiled, the whole strife recoiled on him. Imad set aside both the Emperor and the *wazīr*, and raised, as stated already, Azīzu-d din, a son of Jahandar Shāh, to the throne as Alamgīr II,<sup>1</sup> and himself became the *wazīr* and dictator.

In these squabbles within the Imperial arena, the Marathas had been more than mere disinterested witnesses. We have seen how their puissant arms were coveted in all places. They were not, however, wedded to any party in particular. They assisted Safdar Jang and the Emperor as it suited their ambitious policy in the North. In the civil war between Safdar Jang and the Emperor they had no hesitation in siding with the latter. In the sequel to this struggle they sided with Imādu-l Mulk. They were clever in always backing the winning horse.<sup>2</sup> The revolutions at the capital, although not the fruits of their intrigues, were all carried out with their assistance. Raghunāth Rao, the Peshwa's younger brother, Malhār Rao Holkar, and the Sindhias (Jayappa and Dattāji) were their great generals in the North. They exacted heavy tribute from all and sundry : from the Rajputs, the Jāts, and the Mughals alike, and dominated everywhere.<sup>3</sup> The overthrow of Emperor Ahmad Shāh was not the last word the Marathas had to say in this tumultuous situation. They continued to be the allies of the vigorous young *wazīr*, Imādu-l Mulk, the new "King-maker" of Delhi.

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1. The new Emperor was 55 years of age at his accession.

2. The Peshwa's letter to Dattāji and Jankoji Sindhia, dated 21 March 1759, is an illustration in point. The Peshwa directs them to raise to the *wazīr*-ship whosoever might pay 50 *lacs* in addition to other territorial promises. Sarkar, op. cit., II, p. 232.

3. Ibid., pp. 514-22.

The new Emperor Alamgīr II, whose character and fate have already been described by us, was a mere figure-head. His overthrow and murder in 1759 was due to his own pusillanimity. Like his weak predecessors he gave no unequivocal support to his 'maker' the powerful *wazīr*. The latter following a vigorous policy had incurred the enmity of Najibu-d daulah the new Rohillah leader, as well as the hereditary enemy of his house, the Nawāb of Oudh, Shujāu-d daulah who had succeeded his father Safdar Jang. In the Punjab also Ghāziū-d din (Imād had assumed the title of his father), taking advantage of Minu-l Mulk's death had appointed a capable officer named Adina Beg in order to subdue the turbulent Sikhs and to drive out the Afghans. Ghaziu-d din, therefore, had made a promising beginning to bring the anarchical situation under control. If the Emperor had whole-heartedly supported him in this policy everything would have gone on well. But unfortunately for all concerned, he played into the hands of the *wazīr's* enemies. The *wazīr* in his desperation had recourse to the familiar stratagem of killing the faineant Emperor and replacing him with another puppet. This was, according to the *Ibrat-nāma*, a youth named Muhiu-l Millat, son of Muhius Sunnat, son of Kām Bakhsh. He was raised to the throne as Shāh Jahān II.<sup>1</sup> But he was not recognised by anybody; for the Durrāni was once again upon the scene; and the King-maker himself had to fly for his life. The murdered Emperor's son, Ali Gauhar, was then a fugitive in Bihar. His succession was sponsored by Najibu-d daulah, Shujāu-d daulah and Abdāli; yet, he could not return to his capital except under the 'protection' of the Marathas in 1772. We repeat, therefore, although the 'emperor' continued for another century, the Mughal Empire ceased to exist with the political 'vacuum'<sup>2</sup>

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1. E. & D., op. cit., 243.

2. This phrase is to be understood to mean the compulsory absence of the Emperor from the throne of his ancestors at Delhi. Shāh Alam's heir was no doubt all the time at the capital and

created at Delhi in 1759, and the occupation and destruction of the capital by the rival forces of the Durrānis and the Marathas in 1760. With the subsequent slaughter of the Marathas on the fateful and fatal field of Pānīpat in the early months of 1761 the Empire had nothing to do ; for the very simple reason that it had already ceased to be.

*Iram indeed is gone with all his Rose,  
And Jamshyd's Seven-ringed Cup, where no one knows ;  
.....  
One Moment in Annihilation's waste,  
One Moment in the Well of Life to taste—  
The Stars are setting and the Caravan  
Starts for the Dawn of Nothing—Oh, make haste !*

## VI PĀNĪPAT AND AFTER

We cannot close this denouement of the Imperial drama, however, without depicting the tragic circumstances surrounding the chief actors when the curtain dropped for the last time. The main facts of the situation were that the friends of the Empire had turned its enemies and its enemies friends : Abdāli and the Marathas had interchanged their places in relation to the Emperor ; similarly the *wazīr* and the Rohillas. This 'reversal of alliances' (1757-59) is not less interesting than 'the diplomatic revolution' (1748-56) in the European history of about the same period. Like France and England changing sides in respect of Austria, we find that Abdāli and the Marathas exchange places in respect of the Emperor. In the case of the latter, however, the turn of the tide was brought about, not so much by diplomacy, but by sheer force of events.

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Najibu-d daula was acting in his name. But the fact that the Emperor himself *could not* return to his capital was significant of his impotency. As Sarkar has put it : "From 10th Oct. 1760, when Sadāshiv Rao Bhau deposed the wazīr's puppet Shāh Jahān II and proclaimed Shāh Alam II as Emperor in Delhi, to the 6th of January 1772, when Shāh Alam rode into the capital of his fathers for the first time as sovereign, *the imperial city was widowed of her lord.*"—Sarkar, op. cit., II, p. 373 ; cf. *ibid.*, p. 525.



These must be clearly traced in order to view the third battle of Pānīpat in its proper perspective from the point of view of the Mughal Empire.

The history of the first three invasions of Abdāli has made it plain that the invader was considered an enemy of the Empire. The efforts made by the 4th Invasion of Abdāli, 1757. the Emperor and his *wazīr* to win the support of the Marathas also made it clear that the latter were considered the best friends and defenders of the Empire. The Emperor Alamgīr owed his position to the *wazīr* Imādu-l Mulk Gāziu-d din Fīroz Jang and his Maratha allies. This relationship continued from the accession of Alamgīr II in 1754 to the fourth invasion of the Durrāni in the year of the battle of Plassey (1757). The years following, up to the battle of Pānīpat (1761), were momentous years in the history of India. Dr. V. A. Smith has pointed out how "during the short space of time which intervened between June 1756 and the tragedy of Pānīpat in January 1761 a marvellous change was wrought in the English position both in Bengal and in the peninsula. The conflicts in the south between the English and the French, in which each side was supported by Indian allies, began in 1746 with loss of Madras and ended on January 6, 1761, a week before the battle of Pānīpat, with the conditional surrender to British arms of Pondicherry, the chief French settlement. The events in Bengal were still more startling and fateful. The traders who fled in terror to Fulta in June 1756 were the masters of a rich kingdom exactly twelve months later."<sup>1</sup>

It is hazardous to assert what might have happened to the destiny of India had the reverse happened on the field of Pānīpat. But the fact that India did not present a united front to the Durrāni needs to be well borne in mind. Although in his earlier raids Abdāli had been encouraged by invitations from rebellious Indian *amīrs*, the disunity of India was not pressed to a fatal point until during the 4th and the 5th in-

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1. O. H., p. 466.

vasions of Abdāli. These two last raids of Ahmad Shāh took place during the fateful period 1757-59, and under the following circumstances.

The zealous efforts of the *wazīr* Gāziū-d din to bring matters under his control have already been referred to. 'Imādu-l Mulk, after arranging the revenue and other matters,' says the *Ibrat-nāma*, 'set about the reformation of the cavalry and the *sin dagh* system,<sup>1</sup> which had fallen into a very corrupt state. He removed the Emperor from Shāh-Jahānābād to Pānīpat, and then taking away from the officials of the cavalry the lands which they held round the capital, he appointed his own officers to manage them. The chiefs of the cavalry, *being encouraged by the Emperor and some of his councillors*, were clamorous against the *wazīr*, and sent their *vakils* to him to demand their pay.' These demands were followed up by soldiers who 'went to the pavilion of the *wazīr*, and, collecting there in a mob, raised a great tumult. The *wazīr* heard this, and, proud of his rank and power, came fearlessly out to quell the disturbance. The rioters seized him, and began to abuse him in terms unmentionable. Numbers gathered together from every side, and the mob increased. They tore off his (*wazīr's*) clothes, and in the struggle his turban even fell from his head. Then they dragged him through the streets of Pānīpat to their camp . . . . Meanwhile a message was brought from the Emperor (Alamgir II) to the officers, offering to make himself responsible for their pay *if they would deliver over the wazīr to him as a prisoner*, and telling them that if he escaped from their hands, they would have hard work to get their pay from him . . . . Imādu-l Mulk was much hurt and troubled by the part the Emperor had taken. In a few days they returned to Delhi, and he, leaving the Emperor under the watch of his confidants, proceeded to Lahore.'

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1. This had been introduced by Safdar Jang, and was so called because horses were branded with the first letter of his name—*Sin*.

At Lahore, with the help of Adina Beg, an adventurer, he took possession of the late *subahdār* Muinu-l Mulk's family and belongings and 'gave the province of Lahore to Adina Beg Khān for a tribute of thirty *lacs* of rupees. .'

The widow (of Muinu-l Mulk), hurt by the treatment she had received, let loose her tongue, and in a loud voice reviled and abused the *wazīr*. She added, "*This conduct of yours will bring distress upon the realm, destruction to Shāh Jahānābād, and disgrace to the nobles and the State. Ahmad Shāh Durrāni will soon avenge this disgraceful act and punish you.*"<sup>1</sup>

Ahmad Shāh, on hearing of this daring act of Imādu-l Mulk, came hastily to Lahore. Adina Beg Khān, being unable to resist, fled towards Hansi and Hissar. 'Imādu-l Mulk was frightened . . . . . When Ahmad Shāh drew near to Delhi, Imādu-l Mulk had no resource but submission, . . . . . With all the marks of contrition he went forth to meet the Shāh, and . . . . . he was confirmed in his rank and office, upon condition of paying a heavy tribute. On the 7th of *Jumada-l awwal*, 1170 A.H. (28 Jan. 1757 A.D.), he entered the fortress of Shāh-Jahānābād, and had an interview with the Emperor Alamgīr. He remained in the city nearly a month, plundering the inhabitants, and very few people escaped being pillaged.'<sup>2</sup>

The *Tarikh-i Ibrāhīm Khān* adds other details of Abdālī's 4th invasion. It says that the Shāh married a daughter of the Emperor's brother to his own son Timūr Shāh. He also marched against Suraj Mal Jāt: After causing a general massacre of the garrison, he hastened towards Mathura, and having razed that ancient sanctuary of the Hindus to the ground, made all the idolators fall a prey to his relentless sword . . . . At this time a dreadful pestilence broke out with great virulence in the Shāh's army, so that he was forced to abandon his intention of

1. Cf. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, II, p. 58-61; for the help she rendered to Abdālī, see *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

2. E. & D., *op. cit.*, pp. 238-41.

chastising Suraj Mal, and unwillingly made up his mind to repair to his own kingdom.' <sup>1</sup>

The attempt to collect from Oudh the amount of tribute due to Abdāli brought the *wazīr* into conflict with Shujāu-d daula. The same time, Internal Conflicts. 'Imādu-l Mulk, who was very apprehensive of Najibu-d-daula (the Rohilla chief), excited Dattā Sindhia and Jhanku Mah-ratta to hostilities against him, and promised them several *lacs* of rupees, on condition of their expelling him from the country which he occupied. The Mahratha chiefs accordingly, at the head of their southern armies, attacked Najibu-d daula with impetuosity, and he, as long as he was able, maintained his ground against that force, which was as numerous as ants and locusts, till at last, being unable to hold out longer, he took refuge in the fort of Sakartal. The southrons laid siege to the fort, and having stopped the supplies of grain, put him to great distress. Sindhia, seeing Najibu-d daula reduced to extremities, sent for Imadu-l Mulk from Shāh-Jahānābād, in order to complete the measures for chastising him.' <sup>2</sup> In the meanwhile, 'Imādu-l Mulk, suspicious of the Emperor, and knowing that Intizam-d daula Khān-khānan was his chief adviser, murdered that noble in the very act of saying his prayers.' Likewise was the Emperor also murdered, and his body thrown out of the window, 'stripped of all the clothes,'

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1. E. & D. op. cit., pp. 246-65. For a full account of the atrocities and ravages committed by the Afghan invaders on this occasion, which seem to exceed even those of Nādir Shāh's invasion, see Sarkar, op. cit., II, pp. 98 ff. The immensity of the booty carried away on this occasion may be estimated from the following account :—' Abdāli's own goods were loaded on 28,000 camels, etc., while 200 camel-loads were taken by Muhammad Shāh's widows who accompanied him, and these too belonged to him. 80,000 horse and foot followed him, each man carrying away spoils. His cavalry returned on foot, loading their booty on their charges. For securing transport, the Afghan King left no horse or camel in any one's house, *not even a donkey*. The guns he had brought . . . were left behind, because their draught-cattle had to be loaded with plunder, . . . In Delhi not a sword was left with anybody.'—cited *ibid.*, p. 130.

2. E. & D., op. cit., pp. 241-42.

and the corpse left stark naked. 'After lying on the ground for eighteen hours, the body was taken up by order of Mahdi Ali Khān, and buried in the sepulchre of the Emperor Humā-yūn.'<sup>1</sup> Immediately a new puppet (Shāh Jahān III?) was raised to the throne, and Imād marched against Sakartal. 'In the meantime,' says the *Ibrat-nāma*, from which the above narrative has been abstracted, the report of Ahmad Shāh Durrāni's invasion spread among the people. Imādu'l Mulk, in fear of his life, saw no other means of safety than in seeking the protection of Suraj Mal (Jāt), and accordingly departed without delay for that chief's territory.<sup>2</sup> With his flight his puppet 'Emperor' lost this only champion, and when the next year Sadāshiv Rao Bhāu occupied Delhi, on 9th Oct. 1760, he 'removed Shāh Jahān' and 'seated the illustrious Prince, Mīrza Jawan Bakht, the grandson of Alamgir II, on the throne of Delhi.'<sup>3</sup> But since Sadāshiv Rao also died on the field of Pānīpat in the course of a few months, this Prince also was left without a champion. This brings us to the last scene of the last act.

We have anticipated a little in speaking of Bhāu's occupation of Delhi and his subsequent fate. Dhurrāni's 5th Invasion. That was the outcome of the conflict between the Marathas and Abdālī rendered inevitable by the entry of both into the Punjab. To understand this situation we have to turn to events upon Abdālī's 4th invasion. In the words of the *Tarikh-i Ibrāhīm Khān*, 'The Shāh, after forming a matrimonial alliance with the daughter of his late Majesty Muhammad Shāh, and investing Najibu-d daula with the title of *Amīru-l umara* and the dignified post of *bakhshī*, set out for Lahore. As soon as he had planted his sublime standard on that spot, he conferred both the government of Lahore and Multan on his son, Tīmūr Shāh,

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1. *Ibid.*, pp. 242-43 'This tragedy,' according to this writer, 'occurred on Thursday, the 20th of *Rabīu-s sanī*, 1173 A.M. (30th Nov. 1759 A.D.).

2. *Ibid.*, p. 243.

3. *The Tarikh-i Ibrāhīm Khān. Ibid.*, p. 278.

and leaving Jahān Khān behind him, proceeded himself to Kandahar.' Although Adina Beg was placed in charge of the Doab under the new regime, he soon found himself in conflict with his new masters. On account of this Adina Beg allied himself with the Sikhs and the Marathas,<sup>1</sup> the latter of whom had already come to the rescue of Imādu-l Mulk against Najibu-d daula.

Our chronicler continues, 'Raghunāth Rao and the rest of the Maharatta chiefs set out from Delhi towards Lahore, at the solicitation of Adina Beg Khān, of whom mention has been briefly made above. After leaving the suburbs of Delhi, they arrived first at Sirhind, where they fought an action with Abdūs Samad Khān, who had been installed in that place by the Abdālī Shāh, and took him prisoner. Turning away from thence, they pushed on to Lahore, and got ready for a conflict with Jahān Khān, who was stationed there. The latter, however, being alarmed at the paucity of his troops in comparison with the multitude of the enemy, resolved at once to seek refuge in flight. Accordingly, in the month of *Sha'ban*, 1171 A.H. (April, 1758 A.D.), he pursued the road to Kabul with the utmost speed, accompanied by Timūr Shāh, and made a present to the enemy of the heavy baggage and property that he had accumulated during his administration in that region. The Maharatta chieftains followed in pursuit of Timūr Shāh as far as the river Attock, and then retraced their steps to Lahore. *This time the Maharattas extended their sway up to Multan.* As the rainy season had commenced, they delivered over the province of Lahore to Adina Beg Khān, on his promising to pay a tributary offering of seventy-five *lacs* of rupees; and made up their minds to return to the Dakkhin, being anxious to behold again their beloved families at home.

'On reaching Delhi in the course of their return, they made straight for their destination, after leaving one of their warlike chieftains, named Janku, at the head of a formidable army in the vicinity of the metropolis. It chanced that in the year 1172 A.H. (1758-9 A.D.) Adina Beg Khān passed away; whereupon Jankuji entrusted the government of the province of Lahore to a Maharatta, called Sama, whom he despatched thither. He also appointed Sadik Beg Khān, one of Adina Beg Khān's followers, to the administration of Sirhind, and gave the management of the Doab to Adina Beg Khān's widow. Sama, after reaching Lahore, applied himself to the

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1. Sarkar, op. cit., II, pp. 70-79.

task of government, and pushed on his troops as far as the river Attock. In the meanwhile, Imādu-l Mulk the *wazīr*, caused Shāh Alamgīr II to suffer martyrdom. On the other side, Duttāji Sindhia, invaded Rohilla territory which made Najibud-d daula write numerous letters to Abdāli to induce him to come to Hindustan. The Shāh who was vexed at heart on account of Timūr Shāh and Jahān Khān having been compelled to take to flight, and was brooding over plans of revenge, accounted this friendly overture a signal advantage and set himself at once in motion.<sup>1</sup>

The story of the struggle which ensued out of the situation so far described does not form part of the history of the Mughal Empire. As Mr. Sardesai has pointed out, "it became a point of honour with both powers (the Marathas and Abdāli), the one to keep what was once conquered, the other to reclaim what was lost."<sup>2</sup> Only a few facts connected with this struggle are relevant to our study, and they are as follows :—

1. Ahamad Shāh Durrāni having killed Dattāji Sindhia and put to flight Malhār Rao Holkar at last reached the capital, Delhi, and took up his quarters in the city.

2. On the return of Raghunāth Rao to Poona from the North, in 1759, a more formidable army was immediately despatched by the Peshwa Bālāji Bāji Rao, under the command of his son Vishwās Rao and cousin Sadāshiv Rao Bhāu to drive away the Durrāni : "You must destroy the enemy finally, and hold all the territory up to the Indus."<sup>3</sup> This was the mission on which they were sent.

3. They reached Delhi on 23rd of Sept. 1760, and invested its fort which was then in charge of Yākub Ali Khān, a brother of Ahmad Shāh Durrāni's prime-minister Shāh Wali Khān. After a strenuous siege and defence of the fort fell into the hands of the Marathas. 'Bhāu, entered the fort along with Viswās Rao, and took possession of the property and goods that he could find in the old repositories of the royal family. He also broke in pieces the silver

1. E. & D., p. cit., pp. 264-68.

2. *Letters and Despatches relating to the Battle of Pānīpat*, p. iii. On account of Raghunāth Rao's exploits in the Punjab the nominal ownership of that province had been passed on to the Marathas, with a promise of 75 lacs as tribute from Adina Beg. Likewise, in return for 13 lacs, the Marathas had undertaken to keep 5,000 horse at Delhi for the protection of the Emperor.—Sarkar, op. cit., II, p. 159.

3. See Rawlinson, *Pānīpat*, p. 63.

ceiling of the *Diwāni Khās*, from which he extracted so much of the precious metal as to be able to coin seventeen *lacs* of rupees of it. Nārad Shankar Brahmin was then appointed by Bhāu to the post of governor of the fort.'<sup>1</sup>

4. Najibu-d daula (Rohilla), already an ally of Ahamad Shāh Abdālī, now tried to win over Shujāu-d daula to his side. Najib went in person 'with a conciliatory epistle, which was as it were a treaty of friendship.'<sup>2</sup> Shujāu-d daula ultimately came into the net.

5. Sadāshiv Rao, 'on the 29th of the month of *Safar*, 1174 A.H. (9th October, 1760 A.D.), removed Shāh Jahān, son of Muhiu-s Sunnat, son of Kām Bakhsh, son of Aurangzeb Alamgir, and having seated the illustrious Prince, Mirzā Jawan Bakht, the grandson of Alamgir II, on the throne of Delhi, publicly conferred the dignity of *wazīr* on Shujāu-d daula. His object was this, that the Durrāni Shāh might become averse to and suspicious of the Nawāb in question.'<sup>3</sup>

6. 'In the interim, Rāja Suraj Mal Jāt, who discerned the speedy downfall of the Maratha power, having moved with his troops, *in company with Imādu-l Mulk the wazīr*,.....betook himself to Balamgarh, which is one of his forts.'<sup>4</sup> This is the last we hear of the Emperor of Delhi and his *wazīr*. The gods declared against the Marathas in the wager of battle at Pānīpat, and consequently the 'Emperor' placed on the throne of Delhi by Bhāu in 1760 disappeared with him. The victor, too, was not destined to rule from Delhi. He declared that he came to Hindustan 'at the solicitation of his countrymen, the Rohillas, and other Musalmans, to relieve them from their fear of the Mahratta yoke.'<sup>5</sup>

"Even at this distance of time, the pulses leap as we read of the Abdālī, reflectively pulling at his hookah as he watches

1. E. & D., op. cit., p. 276 ; Sarkar op. cit., pp. 252-55, 265-67.

2. Ibid., Najib told Shujau-d daula : "the Bhao bears a mortal hatred to all Musalmans ; whenever he has the power to show this enmity neither you nor I, nor any other Musalman will escape. Though, after all the destiny of God will be fulfilled yet we ought also to exercise our own faculties to their utmost."—Ibid., p. 11.

3. Sadāshiv Rao tried in vain to secure at least the neutrality of Shujau-d daula.—Ibid. See Sarkar, op. cit., II, pp. 268-69 ; also pp. 274 ff.

4. Ibid., pp. 277-78.

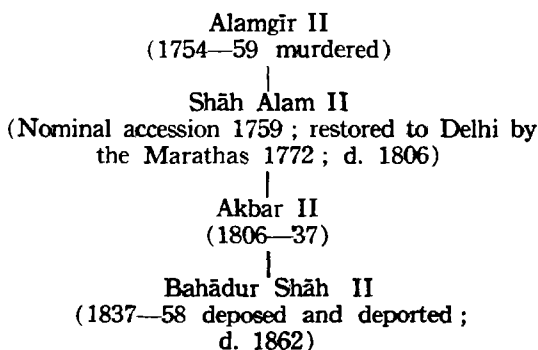
5. Rawlinson, op. cit., p. 28.



*the long lines of the Marathas deploying for action in the dim winter dawn : the Vazir, in full armour, rallying his men with the cry, 'Our country is far off, my friends ; whither do you fly ?' : the choking dust : the combatants rolling on the ground, locked in a deadly embrace ; the cries of 'Din ! Din ! and 'Har, Har, Mahādev !' and lastly, the dramatic annihilation of one of the most splendid and gallant armies that ever took the field. A defeat is, under some circumstances, as honourable as a victory ; and never in all their annals, did the Maratha armies cover themselves with greater glory, than when the flower of the chivalry of the 'Deccan perished on the stricken field of Pānīpat, fighting against the enemies of their creed and country.'"*<sup>1</sup>

#### LAST OF THE MUGHALS

Nothing more remains to be said about the Mughal Empire excepting the fate of the last descendants of Bābur and their shadowy 'power.' The genealogical table of the Later Mughals down to Bahādur Shāh II, has been given elsewhere in this book. A brief account may be here given of the following, representing 'Mughal Emperors' who were *virtual prisoners*, at first of the Marathas and then of the British, until the very last of them, Bahādur Shāh II, was formally *deposed* and deported in 1858:—




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1. Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. xii-xiii.

The only omissions in this are the two Princes raised to the throne of Delhi respectively by the rebellious *wazīr* Imādu-l Mulk and Sadāshiv Rao Bhāu, during the revolution created by the last invasion of Ahmad Shāh Abdālī (1759-60). The first of these, Shāh Jahān III, was displaced by Mirzā Jawan Bakht (grandson of Alamgīr II). But the fact that after Pānīpat, in 1761, Abdālī recognised Shāh Alam II as Emperor eclipsed both the nominees above referred to. The latter of the two (Mirzā Jawan Bakht) continued to act as his father's representative during the 12 years' exile of Shāh Alam from Delhi.

After his victory Ahmad Shāh Durrāni came to Delhi. According to Kāshirāj Pundit, "He wished to seize the empire of Hindostan; but God disapproved of this design." His soldiers mutinied and insisted upon immediate retreat to Kabul. So Abdālī "was obliged to give up his views in Hindostan, and return to Kābul; having received above forty lacs of rupees from Nujeib-u-Dowlah for the assistance which he had given him.... Providence made use of Ahmad Shāh Durrāni to humble the unbecoming pride and presumption of the Mahrattas."<sup>1</sup>

The Persian *Life of Najibu-d daula* lately published by Sir Jadunath Sarkar, gives the following account of the happenings at Delhi after Pānīpat :—

Ahmad Shāh entered Delhi. Wakils of the Jāt with Rājah Nagar Mal—who was an old imperial *mutasaddi* and had been *diwan* of Khalsa, enjoying honours under Muhammad Shāh, Ahmad Shāh and Alamgīr II—came from the Jāt forts and saw Abdālī. The camp of Ahmad Shāh was pitched near the city of Old Delhi. Rumours arose that he would march towards the Deccan. Najib gave the advice that, if that King went to Malwa, a vast amount (of tribute) would be collected. The Jāt Rājah also agreed through Najib to pay a *peshkash* and send a contingent to accompany Abdālī in this march. The Marathas also knew it for certain that Ahmad Shāh would go to the Deccan. But the Durrānis made a great row.... Ahmad Shāh had no help but to retreat. Najib undertook to

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1. Rawlinson, pp. 20-52.

pay the expenses of the Durrāni troops and also said, 'No fighting is now left to be done. If you go to Malwa, I shall bring Nizām Ali Khān to join you on the Narmada, and a spacious and rich kingdom would come into your possession.' But Ahmad Shāh, out of regard for the feelings of his regiment of Khāns, at once marched for Qandahar. Shuja and the Indo-Afghan sardars went back to their homes.<sup>1</sup>

The arrangements made at Delhi by the Durrāni before his departure are worthy of note. The above narrative concludes with the statement : "At the time of marching away, Ahmad Shāh, by the advice of his own *wazīr*, sent the robe of the *wazīr* of India to Imādu-l Mulk and wrote to him to come and enter the city of Delhi, declaring him plenipotentiary on behalf of Abdālī, . . . In the fort of Delhi were the mother of the Emperor Shāh Alam II and (Prince) Mīrzā Jawan Bakht, passing their time in fear and trembling on account of Imād." The fate of Najibu-d daula, considering the part he had played in egging on Abdālī against the Marathas and his further solicitude towards Ahmad Shāh after Pānīpat, is strange indeed. But it is not unintelligible inasmuch as, according to the same account, Shujāu-d daula too was equally disappointed in his expectations from the Durrāni, and went away from him in a huff. Evidently, Ahmad Shāh considered both of them traitors to their own country and therefore unworthy of trust and patronage. This is the only explanation we can give for his appointment of Imādu-l Mulk as his plenipotentiary ; for Imād had retired from Pānīpat together with Suraj Mal Jāt and had kept himself aloof from the struggle.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Sarkar, "An original account of Ahmad Shāh Durrāni's campaigns in India and the battle of Pānīpat : From the Persian life of Najib-ud-daulah, Br. Museum Persian MS. 24,410," in *Islamic Culture*, vol. VII, No. 3 (July 1933).

2. Cf. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 377-78 ; and n p. 532. Najib stole a march over Imād and established his Dictatorship at the capital virtually bamboozling the Heir of Shāh Alam II and the Queen-Mother. He kept himself in touch with Abdālī till 1767 and consulted him about the situation in India from time to time : e.g., in 1762 it was agreed that the Durrāni should call upon all Indian princes to recognise Shāh Alam II and he should receive an annual tribute of 40 *lacs* from India—Ibid., p. 489.

*The Cambridge Shorter History of India* (published in June 1934), however, states : " Ahmad Shāh Abdālī, before leaving India, nominated ' Ali Gauhar as Emperor of Delhi under the title of Shāh Alam.' *Shujā-ud-daula* was appointed *minister*, from which circumstance he and his successors in Oudh were known to the British as *nawāb wazīr*, or ' Nabob-Vazīr,' until permitted, in 1819, to assume the royal title, and Najib Khān was confirmed in the rank and appointment of *Amīr-ul-umārā*." <sup>1</sup>

The *Farhatu-n Nazirīn* also states : ' Muhammad Kuli Khān came to Allahabad, and the news of Alamgīr's death reached Shāh Alam in Patna on which he was much afflicted in his mind ; but ascribing the event to the wise dispensations of Providence, he sat upon the throne of sovereignty on the 5th of *Jumada-l awwal*. *Nawab Shujāu-d daula*, after a few days, came to the border of his territories, and having invited the Emperor from Azīmābād, *obtained the honour of an interview, and was exalted to the hereditary office of wazīr*, and afterwards accompanied him to Allahabad. *It is through the means of that great man that the name of Sahib Kiran Gurgan (Timūr) still remains ; otherwise, the Abdālī would not have allowed any of his descendants to survive.*" <sup>2</sup>

But we are more concerned with the state of the Empire under this titular sovereign. The *Jamī-i Jahān-numā* (written in 1779, already cited) gives us an insight :

' When twenty years had elapsed of the reign of Shāh Alam, ... in every corner of the kingdom people aspired to exercise independence. Allahabad, Oudh, Etawah, Shukohabad, and the whole country of the Afghans (Rohillas) are in the possession of the Nawāb Wazīr Asafu-d daula, and the whole country of Bengal has been subjected by the strong arm of the Firingis. The country of the Jāts is under Najaf Khān, and the Dakhin is partly under Nizām Ali Khān, partly under the Mahrattas, and partly under Haidar Naik and Muhammad Ali Khān Sirāju-d daula of Gopamau. The Sikhs hold

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1. *The Cambridge Shorter History of India* p. 478 (*Italics mine*).

2. F. & D., op. cit., pp. 172-73.

the whole *suba* of the Punjab, and Lahore, and Multan ; and Jain-nagar and other places are held by Zabita Khān. In this manner other *Zamīndārs* have established themselves here and there. All the world is waiting in anxious expectation of the appearance of Imām Mahdī, who is to come in the latter days. Shāh Alam sits in the palace of Delhi, and has no thought beyond the gratification of his own pleasure, while his people are deeply sorrowful and grievously oppressed unto death.<sup>1</sup>

Only a few events need be mentioned here in order to indicate the helplessness and miserable condition of Shāh Alam. In 1765, after the English victory over the Nawāb Wazīr at Buxar the previous year, the Emperor received from the English the districts of Kora and Allahabad with an agreement to pay him 26 *lakhs* of rupees a year out of the revenues of Bengal, in return for which he issued a grant, to the English, of the *diwāni* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The Emperor thereafter lived under British protection until he chose to go over to the Marathas who, under Mahādaji Sindhia restored him to his throne and palace at Delhi in 1772. Thereupon Shāh Alam forfeited Kora and Allahabad, which were given to the Nawab Wazīr, and also the 26 *lakhs* promised by the English.

In 1788 the Emperor was brutally blinded and subjected to unspeakable horrors in his own palace by an Afghan ruffian named Ghulam Kādir. The *Ibrat-nāma* gives harrowing details of the havoc wrought by this fiendish rogue, which only serve to illustrate that the Emperor was not now master even of his own palace and person. He was dethroned, beaten, imprisoned, blinded, robbed ; his sons were similarly manhandled and made to dance and sing before the tyrant ; the ladies of his household were outraged in the most heinous fashion imaginable ; and finally, the monster called for a painter, and said, "Paint my likeness at once, sitting, knife in hand, upon the breast of Shāh Alam, digging out his eyes !"<sup>2</sup>

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1. E. & D., op. cit., pp. 184-85. Sarkar attributes the failure of Shāh Alam largely to the moral decay of the Mughal nobility. "Nowhere could he find a single faithful friend or able lieutenant."—op. cit., II, p. 527.

2. E. & D., op. cit., pp. 244-54.

When a descendant of Bābur and Akbar had fallen into such low and miserable impotency, little need be said about his last two successors. Although the East India Company had refused to pay Shāh Alam the 26 lakhs of rupees promised to him in return for the *diwāni*, they continued to respect his authority as Emperor for all formal purposes : "The seal of the governor-general purported to be that of a servant of the Mughal. The coinage was still struck in Shāh Alam's name. In international discussions the English did not claim sovereignty except in Calcutta and the surrounding region, posing elsewhere as the influential adviser of the nawab who reigned, but did not rule, at Murshidābād."<sup>1</sup>

But the times were changing very fast indeed. "Cornwallis was the first governor-general (1786) to object to the empty formulas in which the company's government was accustomed to protest obedience in his letters to the emperor. Wellesley, who indeed projected the establishment of British predominance in India, carried matters much further. By Lord Lake's victory at Delhi (1803, over Daulat Rao Sindhia), the person of the Emperor passed into the custody of the East India Company. By the arrangements which Wellesley then made, the administration of Delhi was to be conducted in the imperial name, but the only spot in which the Imperial orders were really effective was the palace and its precincts. . . . Lord Moira, who arrived as governor-general in 1813, brought out with him a fixed determination to make an end of 'the fiction of the Mogul government.' The phrase denoting 'the imperial supremacy was removed from his seal. No more ceremonial gifts were offered to the Emperor, Akbar II, Shāh Alam's son, unless he waived all authority over the company's possessions . . . in 1827 the Emperor consented to meet Moira's successor, Amherst, on equal terms. . . . In 1835 the coinage of Bengal ceased to be struck in the name of the dead Emperor, Shāh Alam, whose titles had continued to appear on the company's

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1. *The Cambridge Shorter History of India*, p. 683.

rupees till that year. Then it was resolved to induce the imperial family to remove from the old palace at Delhi to a new residence which was to be built for it near the Kutb Minār, and at last Canning decided no longer to recognise the imperial title after the demise of the existing emperor, Bahādur Shāh. Immediately after this the Mutiny broke out. After the fall of Delhi, the emperor was placed on his trial for complicity in the murders which had taken place at Delhi and, more doubtfully, for rebellion against the East India Company. He was declared deposed ; he passed the rest of his days as state-prisoner at Rangoon, and the British government became both in form and in substance supreme as well as sovereign in India."<sup>1</sup>

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1. *The Cambridge Shorter History of India*, pp. 684-85. At the Round Table Conference, it was reported some scions of the old Imperial Mughal Family asked for special representation. *Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis* : the times are changed, and we with them !

## CHAPTER XII

### REVIEW OF THE EMPIRE : ITS ACHIEVEMENTS AND FAILURES

"India as she is is a problem which can only be read by the light of Indian History. Only by a gradual and loving study of how she came to be, can we grow to understand what the country actually is, what the intention of her evolution, and what her sleeping potentiality may be."—SISTER NIVEDITA.

'History is not simply information regarding the affairs of Kings who have passed away ; but it is a science which expands the intellect, and furnishes the wise with examples.'—TARIKH-I DAUDI.

Our study of the Mughal Empire in India has been laborious but authentic. We have, as it were, combed the pages of contemporary chronicles in order to arrive at a collocation of *facts* that should be the basis of all warrantable generalisations. For "facts are the bricks on which reason builds the edifice of knowledge."<sup>1</sup> But, as the author of the *Tarikh-i Daudi* reminds us, 'History is not simply information regarding the affairs of Kings who have passed away ; but it is a science which expands the intellect, and furnishes the wise with examples.' Mughal history is not without its lessons, its inspirations and its warnings. An attempt will be made in this concluding survey to review the Imperial venture as a whole, with a view to assess its achievements no less than its failures. The roots of the present are imbedded in the past, and the glory as well

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1. Pigou, *Memorials of Alfred Marshall*, p. 86 (Macmillan, 1925).



as the mortification of so recent a past, as that we have studied through authentic and undeniable sources, should influence our destiny as a nation, for good and for evil. "History," said Goethe, "must from time to time be re-written, not because new facts have been discovered, but because new aspects come into view, because the participation in the progress of an age is led to standpoints from which the past can be regarded and judged in a novel manner." The *facts* of Mughal history have been fairly well known; the *new aspects* will come into view as we proceed. We shall focus our attention here upon the following points:—

- i. The Mughals and the Empire;
- ii. The Empire and the Afghans;
- iii. The Empire and the Rajputs;
- iv. The Empire and the Marathas;
- v. The Empire and the Europeans;
- vi. The Legacy of the Empire ✓
- vii. The Lessons of the Empire. ✓

Although we have called our study a history of the *Mughal Empire* in India, following an established

- i. The Mughals and the Empire.

vogue, the reader will recall to mind the observation made in a note appended to the Genealogical Table of Bābur, its founder, viz., that Bābur was really a *Turk* descended through the main line from Tīmūr, and Mongol (or Mughal) only in the female line from Chengiz Khān. The practice of calling Bābur and his descendants *Mughal* arose from the fact that all Musalmans, coming from the North-West of India, excepting the Pathans, were so called from their earliest contact with this country. At any rate they were known to the Arabs and the Persians.<sup>1</sup> Any satisfactory discussion of the ethnic origins and traits of the Indian Mughals, while it should be of considerable interest and value as an independent study, is too much for us to

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1. See *Encyclopædia Britannica* (14th ed.).

undertake here.<sup>1</sup> For our purposes the following observations of Khāfi Khān should suffice :—

‘ Although from the time of Akbar the word *Mughol* has been applied to the Turks and Tajiks of Iran (Persia) to such an extent that even the Sayyids of Iran and Khorasan were called *Mughols*, yet in reality the word is the proper term for those Turks who belong to the descendants and house of *Mughol Khān* ; and it was used in this sense in the time of the earlier (Moslem) kings of Delhi. The pedigree of the descendants of *Mughol Khān* reaches down to *Changez Khān* and the *Amir Tīmūr*.’<sup>2</sup>

To the above remarks might be added the comments of H. G. Keene who says, “ The more the matter is looked into the more likely will it appear that the distinction between Turk and Mongol is not altogether a natural distinction, but one proceeding from comparatively recent and artificial causes—causes arising out of a fusion, more or less complete, of Tajik (Aryan) and Tartar (Mongol nomad). It may be going too far to conclude that a Mongol is merely a Turk in embryo . . . a Turk little more than a civilized and circumcised Mongol or Tartar ; but Mongol in Turkish mouths becomes ‘ *Moghol* ’ ; the Persians, softening still further, turn it into ‘ *Mughul*.’ or ‘ *Mughal* ’ ; and thus the words ‘ *Mughal Empire* ’ . . . an evident misnomer—may have come to be applied to the government of India by Tartar conquerors, who had adopted Aryan manners and a Semitic creed (assimilating themselves in both respects to their Osmanli kindred in Eastern Europe), and

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1. For further light on this subject the reader is referred to Erskine's Introduction to his *Baber and Humayun*, his Introduction to the *Memoirs of Babur*, and Keene's *The Turks in India*.

2. Cited by Keene, op. cit., p. 24, who also adds : “ The writer also notices that the second vowel ought to be written and pronounced long, as indeed it is written in Taimur's Memoirs. So that, of all spellings, *Mogul*, *Mongol*, *Mughal*, and *Mughol* or *Mughól*, it is the last only that is quite correct. The poet Khūsru, too (Arc. 1300) makes the word rhyme with Arabic words of the conjugation fa'íl.”

who had kept little or nothing of the old wild Mughal, or Mongol, either in features or character.”<sup>1</sup>

Chengiz Khān and Timūr, especially the latter, were names to conjure with among the Indian Mughals who retained some of their fundamental traits for generations. Hence a few observations about each one of these great conquerors would not be out of place. Both of them were noted for their great and untiring energy and ferocity. The Mughal Emperors of India, excepting perhaps their last decadent representatives, retained both these characteristics of their remote ancestors, though, owing to other influences, most of them drew a veil of humanity over their primitive ferociousness.

An examination of the *Yassa* or the Code of Chengiz Khān reveals the fact that the humaner instincts of the Indian Mughals were not altogether wanting in their Mongol forefathers. As Mr. Harold Lamb has pointed out, “A psychologist might say that the *Yassa* aimed at three things—obedience to Genghis Khān, binding together of the nomad clans, and the merciless punishment of wrong-doing.” “Himself a man of violent rages, Genghis Khān denied his people their most cherished indulgence, violence.” “Regarding strong drink, a Mongol failing, he said: ‘A man who is drunk is like one struck on the head; his wisdom and skill avail him not at all. Get drunk only three times a month. It would be better not to get drunk at all. But who can abstain at all?’” “The Mongols were both tolerant and rapacious . . . . He (Chengiz Khān) instilled into his victorious Mongols three ideas that persisted for generations—that they must not destroy peoples who submitted voluntarily, that they must never cease from war with those who resisted, and that they must tolerate all religions in equal measure.”<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., pp. 1-2.

2. *Genghis Khān*, pp. 74-5, 128 n. (Key-stone Library, London, 1934.)

As a leader of men "Genghis Khān had the gift of eloquence to stir deep-seated emotions in them. And he never doubted his ability to lead them." The Mongols had the instinct for organised warfare. As the writer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (14th ed.) has observed, "The Mongol force was a machine which worked like clock-work, and this very mobility made it irresistible to troops far more strongly armed and numerous." This was largely the achievement of Chengiz Khān. Under him, Mr. Lamb points out, "The horde itself was no haphazard gathering of clans. Like the Roman legion it had its permanent organization, its units of ten to ten thousand the *tuman* that formed a division, needless to say of cavalry . . . . The *Yassa* ruled it, the lash of inexorable authority held it together. Gengiz Khān had under his hand a new force in warfare, a disciplined mass of heavy cavalry capable of swift movement in all kinds of country. Before his time the ancient Persians and Parthians had perhaps as numerous bodies of cavalry, yet they lacked the Mongols' destructive skill with the bow and savage courage."<sup>1</sup> To this the Indian Mughals added the Turkish accomplishment of the more destructive artillery which Bābur introduced into India for the first time.

For almost every one of the observations made above, the reader will recall scores of illustrations from Mughal history in India : The tireless energy of Bābur, Akbar, and Aurangzeb ; their control and discipline of their armies through the influence of personality, eloquence and punishment ; their restraint over soldier and subject in the matter of drink and violence, despite their own personal weakness for both ; the religious toleration of most of the descendants of Bābur ; and the *mansabdāri* organisation of Akbar based upon cavalry units of ten to ten thousand and above, etc.

Tīmūr appears to have imparted to the Mughals most of their unamiable traits ; the fanaticism, cruelty, greed for wealth and lust of mere conquest that we find in some of the Mughals

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1. *Genghis Khān*, pp. 79-80. (Key-note Library, London, 1934.)

is traceable to this source. "My object in the invasion of Hindustan," said Tīmūr, "is to lead an expedition against the infidels, that, according to the law of Muhammad, we may convert to the true faith the people of that country, and purify the land itself from the filth of infidelity and poly-theism; and that we may overthrow their temples and idols and become *Ghāzis* and *Mujahids* before God." His achievements in India may be summed up in his own words: "The sword of Islam was washed in the blood of the infidels, and all the goods and effects, the treasure and the grain, which for many a long year had been stored in the fort, became the spoil of my soldiers. They set fire to the houses and reduced them to ashes and they razed the buildings and the fort to the ground." His orders were so strict that, according to the *Malfuzat-i-Tīmūri*, Maulana Nāsiru-d din Omar, who had never killed a sparrow in his life, was obliged to kill fifteen idolatrous Hindus. But with the instinct for savagery that Tīmūr displayed in erecting pyramids of skulls of people destroyed there was also mingled a genius for buildings. This made him spare the artisans, builders, and other craftsmen, even in India, and carry them away like Mahmud of Ghazni to his own homelands. "Several thousands craftsmen and mechanics were brought out of the city, and under the command of Tīmūr, some were divided among the princes, *Amīrs* and *Aghas* who had assisted in the conquest, and some were reserved for those who were maintaining the royal authority in other parts. Tīmūr had formed the design of building a *Masjid-i-Jami* in Samarqand, his capital and he now gave orders that all the stone-masons should be reserved for that pious work."<sup>1</sup>

The Indian Mughals, therefore, it will not be wrong to conclude, were the fulfilment of the best and the worst instincts of their forebears. By a prophetic instinct also the followers of Tīmūr as well as Bābur had felt that settlement in India

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1. *Mulfuzat-i-Tīmuri* and *Zfār-nāma*: E. & D., op. cit., III pp 394-477; 479-522.

would mean deterioration of their character as warriors and conquerors. Their worst fears were fulfilled, though gradually and imperceptibly, in the course of over two centuries. This may not be attributed entirely to the enervating influence of the Indian climate : the Indian part of the modern army has proved its efficiency under all tests. The deterioration of the Mughals must therefore be attributed to other causes. But before we proceed to analyse these, we might refer to another dubious factor, viz., the racial inter-mixture of Mughal with Hindustāni and Persian blood. The reader will remember that mothers of most of the Mughal Princes, Jahāngīr onwards, belonged to one or other of these two races. But neither the Persians nor the Rajputs or other Hindustānis who supplied the stalks on which the Indian Mughals were bred were wanting in martial qualities or traditions. There is no reason why any intermixture of them should have proved destructive to those qualities. On the contrary there is ample evidence to believe that, with rare exceptions among the later Mughals, all the descendants of Bābur kept up their physical stamina and courage remarkably well, in the midst of the most adverse circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

There are instances, no doubt, of Mughal Princes who died of consumption and other wasting diseases ; but these exceptions were due to their own personal dissipations and not the result of the deterioration of the stalk from which they sprang.

What has been said of the Imperial house may not have been equally true of the rank and file. There must have been comparatively greater deterioration among lesser men of the ruling race. But even here it is necessary to remember that

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1. Keene thinks that the fact of the "uncommon succession of high qualities in a race born to the purple", among other reasons, may be ascribed to "the habit of contracting marriages with Hindu princesses, which . . . . was a source of fresh blood, whereby the increase of family predisposition was checked."—*The fall of the Moghul Empire of Hindustan*, p. 16.

the larger part of the Imperial army, after Bābur and Humā-yūn, consisted not of the Mughals but other Musalmans and Hindustānis. There were only a few divisions of Mughals as such, in the army, though among the nobility the Mughal or Turani party continued to exercise power in the Empire for quite a long period. These nobles were undoubtedly demoralised on account of a variety of circumstances, but their deterioration need not necessarily have proved fatal to the Mughal Empire.

If the complex disease with which the Imperial structure was stricken in its later days is to be indicated by two of its most outstanding symptoms, we might say that its prostration was brought about by LUXURY and INTESTINAL FEUDS :

‘Where wealth accumulates men decay ;’  
And disloyalty on the Empire did prey.

The decadence of the Emperors and the nobility under the deadly effects of these two poisons may be illustrated by a few examples. Jahāndar Shāh and Ahmad Shāh may be cited as the worst specimens of the descendants of the hardy and noble warriors Bābur and Akbar. Despite the luxury and pomp of the prosperous reigns of Akbar, Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān, the Mughal Emperors had to a large extent succeeded in maintaining their personal *vim* by means of military campaigns and hunting expeditions. Bahādur Shāh I, son and successor of Aurangzeb, was noted for his craze for outdoor life. He never felt at ease under any roof. Even Farrukhsiyar was a fine specimen of the Mughal physique. Kām-Bukhsh as a captive on his death-bed regretted that a descendant of Tīmūr was captured alive. But Jahāndar Shāh and Ahmad Shāh were not ashamed to be caught up in the tresses of their concubines who came between them and their duties as Emperors.

They looked on beauty  
And turned away from duty.

The former fooled himself in public with his Lāl Kunwar ; the latter buried himself in his seraglio—which extended over four miles square—for weeks together without seeing the face of a male ! When gold rusts what will iron do ? The *amirs* were only in a worse condition. With the exception of a few honourable exceptions like Nizāmu-l Mulk, even where they were not wanting in personal bravery they too were spoilt by luxury, personal ambition, envy of fellow-nobles, and above all by their want of loyalty either to the Empire or to the Emperor. We have seen how the strength and fortunes of the Empire varied with the strength of the Emperor's personal character. The Emperor, in fact, was the keystone of the arch ; the army and the treasury constituted the cement that held the whole structure together. The nobles were the flag-stones. The Empire indeed fell on evil days when corruption set in all these elements. Foreign invaders like Nādir Shāh and Ahmad Shāh Abdālī, on the one hand, and internal parasites of all descriptions sucked the Imperial treasury dry ; the army lost its cohesion, discipline and loyalty, being composed more and more of mere mercenaries. ("In short," as Irvine has pointed out, "excepting want of personal courage, every other fault in the list of military vices may be attributed to the degenerate Moghuls : indiscipline, want of cohesion, luxurious habits, inactivity, bad commissariat, and combrous equipment."<sup>1</sup> Or, indeed, as another writer has described, "The heroic soldiers of the early Empire, and their not less heroic wives, had given place to a vicious delicate breed of grandees. The ancestors of Aurangzeb who swooped down on India from the north were ruddy men in boots : the courtiers among whom Aurangzeb grew up were pale persons in petticoats. Bābur, the founder of the Empire, had swum every river which he met with during thirty years' campaigning ; the luxurious nobles around the youthful Aurangzeb wore skirts made of innumerable folds of the finest white muslin and went to war in palan-

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1. Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Moghuls*, p. 300.



quins.”<sup>1</sup> Riding on richly caparisoned horses with bells, chains and ornaments of precious gems and metals, they were more admirably fitted to prance in a peaceful procession than capable of long exertion in protracted warfare. Each nobleman endeavoured to vie with his master in magnificence, and even private soldiers attended to comfort in their tents, “and the line of march presented a long train of elephants, camels, carts, and oxen, mixed up with a crowd of camp-followers, women of all ranks, merchants, shopkeepers, servants, cooks, and all kinds of ministers of luxury, amounting to ten times the number of the fighting men.”<sup>2</sup>

This effeminacy of the nobility and army was rendered worse by their internal feuds and jealousies fostered by rival claimants to the throne in the Mughal ruling house itself. When Princes of the Royal blood fought among themselves casting all principles of humanity and decency to the winds, for *takht ya takhta* (crown or the coffin), the nobles were compelled to take sides and often act hypocritically and to gain only selfish personal ends. This tendency of rebellion and disloyalty is seen from the very beginning : Kāmran, Hindāl and Askeri, under Humāyūn ; Mīrzā Muhammad and Salim, under Akbar ; Prince Khūsru under Jahāngīr ; Aurangzeb, Dārā, Shūjā and Murād under Shāh Jahān ; Princes Muhammad Muaazam and Akbar under Aurangzeb ; Azam and Kām Bakhsh under Bahādur Shāh ; and so on the tale of treason and fratricidal strife is carried on to the very end of the utter destruction of the noble house of Bābur and Akbar. No wonder that “King-makers”, abortive or successful, arose under each reign : Ali Khalifā under Bābur and Humāyūn ;

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1. “The hardy troops of Balkh had grown soft in the Capua of the Jamna, and their religious convictions had gone the way of the Deputy of Achaie . . . . The rough breath of their highland birth-place was changed to sickly essences ; . . . . and immortality and debauchery had followed close upon the loosening of the religious bond.”—Lane-Poole, *Aurangzib* pp. 18-19.

2. Elphinstone, op. cit., pp. 659-60.

Bairam Khān under Humāyūn and Akbar ; Mān Singh under Akbar and Jahāngīr ; Mahābat Khān under Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān ; Mīr Jumla under Shāh Jahān and Aurangzeb ; Munīm Khān under Bahādur Shāh. These had their hey-day under the later Mughals : The Saiyad Brothers, Safdar Jang and Imādu-d Daula are all familiar to the reader. Last but not the least, the Marathas and the English should be remembered for their rôle, if not of 'making' kings, of 'un-making' them. Indeed, as we have pointed out in the Introduction, when Nādir Shāh invaded, he not merely despoiled the capital of its wealth, but also robbed the crown of its prestige. In other words, Nādir Shāh saw the Empire already at its *nadir*. Abdālī and the Marathas only flogged a dead horse and tried either to kill or prop up a creature that was already dead.

Bābur founded the Mughal Empire in 1526 by overthrowing the Lodies who were Afghans. In the following years, besides the Rajputs, he had to fight Afghan chiefs in Jaunpur and Bihar before he could make sure that his Empire in India would endure. Still, when he died in 1530 he had not subdued important Afghan dynasties in Hindustan like those of Bengal and Gujārat. After his death the Afghans gave his son Humāyūn no end of trouble. They rallied round particularly two leaders, viz., Bahādur Shāh and Sher Shāh. The latter, as we have seen, in the course of less than ten years, drove the son of Bābur into exile. The Afghans were inspired to feel that they were in no way inferior to the Mughals ; they were made to realise that they had lost their dominion in Hindustan only on account of their clannishness and want of unity ; and finally they were organised to recover their lost hegemony. And although the death of Sher Shāh made this glory a shortlived triumph and enabled Humāyūn to come back to his own, the real work of the Afghan adventurer endured. Akbar raised his whole administrative structure on the foundations laid by an Afghan genius. The Rajputs were

assimilated into the Empire by Akbar's statesmanship, but the Afghans refused to be so absorbed. Gujarat sheltered many a rebel against the Mughal Emperor, and was not subdued until 1573, and Dāūd Khān in Bengal held aloft the Afghan standard until three years later (1576).

The next five years were memorable on account of the great social and religious reforms sought to be introduced by Akbar. As we have seen, matters came to a crisis in 1581 when all the reactionary elements attempted to overthrow the régime of the reforming Emperor. The Afghans during this period of storm and stress must have aligned themselves with the enemies of Akbar, but the tempest subsided soon after. There was no trouble from the Afghans for the rest of the reign. But after the death of Akbar, on account of the frequent transfer of governors, they found an opportunity in the eastern province of Bengal. The rebellion of Usman during this period has already been dealt with in the proper context. On 12th March 1612 the rebels were defeated finally and Usman, the Afghan Hereward the Wake, died of a fatal wound. "The political power of the Afghans, who had been so long hostile to the Mughal rule, was completely broken, and Jahāngīr by his conciliatory policy turned them from foes into friends of the empire." As the author of the *Mukzan-i Afghana* observes: 'Nuruddin Ghāzī (Jahāngīr) pardoning them their former trespasses, attached them to himself by the bonds of bounty; and paid so much attention to them, that they abolished all further treasonable designs from their minds, and thought themselves bound to continue subservient and attached to him, even to the sacrifice of life.'<sup>1</sup> Thereafter the Afghans merged their separate and independent existence in the fabric of the Mughal Empire and seemed to reconcile themselves to the lot of many another proud community. Soon

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1. See Sarkar and Datta, *Text-Book of Modern Indian History*, Vol. I. pp. 109-10.

they were favoured with the loaves and fishes of the official hierarchy and were all but absorbed like the Rajputs.

The hold of the Mughals over Kabul, from 1504 (when it was first acquired by Bābur) to 1738 (when it was captured by Nādir Shāh) gave the Empire a vantage-ground for full 235 years. In it the Emperors possessed the key to the north-western gateway of India; and it also proved an invaluable recruiting centre for an important section of the Imperial army. But, when it slipped away, on account of the bungling and impotency of Muhammad Shāh and his successors, the life-blood of the Empire oozed away. The master of Kabul appeared to be destined to dominate over the plains of the Punjab and Hindustan. As Bābur had done two centuries and a half earlier, Ahmad Shāh Abdālī, made use of Kabul as a stepping stone for entry into India. That he did not attempt to found another Afghan dynasty at Delhi was one of the accidents of history. He found among the Rohillas and Bangash Afghans of Hindustan loyal supporters and allies, but still he chose to reinstate a Mughal Emperor rather than uproot the usurpers of the dominion of his race. The Afghan generals (whether Bangash, Rohilla, or Pathan) played an important rôle under the later Mughals; and they also formed the backbone, together with some of the Turānī nobles, of the orthodox *Sunni* party—opposed to the *Shias* who were mainly composed of the Hindustānī Musalmans and the Irānīs or Persians. It was these Afghans that, after two centuries and a half, had their full measure of vengeance against the Mughals. It was they that invited their national hero, Durr-i-durrānī, to invade India once more, and under the guise of friendship really established an Afghan dictatorship at Delhi under Najibu-d Daulah for nearly a decade after the third battle of Pānīpat (1761-69). But, alas, it was the revenge of the blind Sampson. The whole Philistine structure crashed over their heads no less than over others. The Marathas and the English did not allow them to enjoy this dubious satisfaction for long.

Bābur's victory over Ibrāhīm Lodi had placed him on the throne of Delhi ; but before he could make sure of his mastery over Hindustan, he had to subdue Rāna Sanga and Medini Rai, besides the fugitive Afghan chiefs scattered over North India. The strength of the Rajput resistance to the founder of the Mughal dominion is not to be minimised because of its failure. But for Bābur's advent the Rajputs had come very near recovering their hegemony over western Hindustan, at any rate, down to Gujarat and Malwa. Bābur himself recognised the strength and valour of Rāna Sanga and had to put forth all the skill and effort his genius could command.

Rāna Sanga left no worthy successor, and Rāni Karnawati of Mewar had to appeal to Humāyūn for assistance when Chitor was besieged by Bahādur Shāh of Gujarat. Yet, Sher Shāh, who succeeded in driving the Mughal out of India and refounding Afghan dominion, confessed, at the end of his arduous Rajput campaign, that, for a handful of *bajra*, he had come very near to losing his empire in Hindustan. He could defeat the Rajputs only by having recourse to the ruse of the forged letters. It is not surprising to note that he entrusted the building of New Rohtas to Rājah Todar Mal<sup>1</sup> who appears on the stage of history for the first time in this connexion.

Humāyūn had sought refuge in vain from Rājah Maldeo of Jodhpur during his flight. Nevertheless it was the Rāna of Amarkot that sheltered the fugitive for a time, and Akbar seemed to carry in his blood the feelings of gratitude that his sorely tried father must have felt at that moment. Despite the ruthlessness that attended his conquest of Chitor, his

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1. Rāja Todar Mal seems to have been a *Khatrı* by caste, and Rājah Birbal (referred to later in this section) a *Brahman*. But both these have been included here under the *Rajputs*, because *in spirit* and *outlook*, as well as by *vocation*, they were indistinguishable from the Rajputs. Likewise, no distinctions of clans and sections of the Rajputs have been specified, the term being used in a very broad sense.

policy and attitude towards the Rajputs as a whole were characterised by a broadmindedness that converted the enemy into a bulwark of the Empire. The chivalrous instincts which prompted Akbar to erect memorials to his heroic enemies, Jai Mal and Patta, could not but evoke an echo in the hearts of his more chivalrous adversaries. Rājahs Bhār Mal, Bhagwān Dās, Bīrbal, Todar Mal and Mān Singh were the most loyal supporters of Akbar, who formed the pillars of his State. As the exalted position accorded to these and the dignified terms that were conceded to the Hadas of Bundi (cited earlier in this book) indicated, Akbar respected the Rajputs and the Rajputs respected him. But for the strength derived from the Rajputs, both in the civil and the military departments, the Mughals would have lost much of the glory that they achieved under Akbar and his immediate successors.

Thanks to Akbar's marriage policy, his son Jahāngīr was in blood half Hindu and half Muslim.<sup>1</sup> Jahāngīr in his turn, following in the footsteps of his father, left a successor, Shāh Jahān, who was racially more Hindu than Muslim. It is strange, in view of this pedigree, that Shāh Jahān should have initiated the swing of the liberal pendulum in the opposite direction. Akbar had wisely attempted to knit the social and political fabric of his Empire closely by means of inter-marriages and abolition of all racial and religious distinctions in the matter of 'Imperial preference.' Jahāngīr's reign saw no 'rift in the lute'; on the other hand, the cement was allowed to set. But in the next generation, the Muslim blood in the veins of Shāh Jahān seemed to be in conflict with his Hindu blood. This made him partially to reverse his father's and grandfather's policy, as shown by his abolition of the *sijdah* and sun-worship and more positively by his destruction of the Hindu temples at Benares. This reaction, as we have seen,

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1. Readers will recall to their minds the union of the Lancastrians and Yorkists in England by Henry VII's marriage with Elizabeth of York.

reached its acme of fanatical fervour in the person of Aurangzeb, the next ruler. He could console himself that no infidel fathered or mothered him; but he took to wife a Princess who was Rajput, by birth at any rate, and through her left a successor, Bahādur Shāh I, whose father alone could claim to be a Mughal. But even the fanatical Alamgīr, who penalised the Hindus on account of their religion, destroyed their temples and levied from them invidious contributions like the *jaziya*, could not dispense with the services of great Rajput generals like Mirzā Rājah Jai Singh and Rājah Jaswant Singh. Though he proved ungrateful to them in the end, much of Aurangzeb's military strength and diplomatic talent were drawn from them. Shivāji would have defied the Empire with greater non-chalance but for a Jai Singh being on its side. The greatest folly of Aurangzeb lay in alienating such great supporters. He made the vain endeavour of subjugating them by sheer brute force, and his failure indicated that the Rajput could support the Empire as well as ruin it. Prince Akbar was won over by them and they came very near to teaching Aurangzeb the lesson he most needed.

Bahādur Shāh recovered much of the love of the Rajputs by his more conciliatory policy. He practically allowed them to enjoy their liberty in their own desert homes unmolested. The effect was seen in Ajit Singh being prepared to give his daughter in marriage to Farrukh-siyar, though after the fall of that Emperor he took her back to his home. Under the Emperors that followed, there was increasing chaos both within Rajputana and the Mughal Empire. The corrupt generals of the latter could effect little in Rajputana, and the Rajputs themselves sought relief at the hands of the equally, if not more, dangerous Marathas who proved their ruin. Even under such conditions, the Emperor Ahmad Shāh could get rid of a rebellious and dictatorial *wazīr*, like Safdar Jang, only by invoking the aid of the Rajput Mādhō Singh of Jaipur. The grateful Emperor placed on the Rājah's head his own jewelled turban and loaded his followers with gifts, and what was more

welcome to Madho Singh, the fort of Rantambhor was restored to the Rajputs. Had Akbar's cordial relations with the Rajputs continued, without being interrupted by Aurangzeb's fatal fanaticism, perhaps it would have gone well with both. But the Todar Mals and Jai Singhs were destined to be mere memories.

The Rajputs have been credited with more valour than wisdom. But, if they are to be judged by their contributions to the Mughal Empire, they distinguished themselves equally in both. Rāna Sanga's resistance to Bābur, the heroic stand of Chitor against Akbar, the unconquerable spirit of Rāna Pratāp, the intrepid activities of Durgādās—all showed that the Rajputs would sooner break than bend. On the other hand, the disappearance of Rāna Sanga after Khānua, the retirement of Udai Singh into the Aravalis, the submission of Amar Singh to Jahāngīr, the acceptance of Mughal peerage by even Ajit Singh and Durgādās, in the end, equally indicated that the Rajput knew when to yield, as well as he knew when to fight. Bīrbal, Mān Singh, Todar Mal, Jaswant Singh and Jai Singh served the Empire both by their valour and their wisdom. While eminently distinguished for their heroic resistance to the Muslims throughout their history, the Rajputs as a race revealed remarkable capacity for compromise when they yielded up their daughters to be mother of Muslim Princes and provided the Mughals the best military acumen that India could then offer. This was no meek or abject surrender, but honourable co-operation that lent dignity to him that gave and him that took, and blessed both. The Rajput's love of independence under these conditions is perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in the Treaty of the Hadas, already referred to, and in the answer that Man Singh gave to Akbar when he was invited to accept the *Din-i Ilahi*: "I know of Islam and respect it; I know of Hinduism and am proud to own it; but I know nothing of this new faith, and cannot accept it". It was this spirit of self-respecting co-operation that gave



strength to the Mughal Empire during the period of its survival. It was the undermining of that spirit, by the folly of Aurangzeb, that laid the axe to the root of its existence. Even after their homes were harried by the desecrating hands of Aurangzeb and his generals, the resumption of a more accommodating attitude, by Bahādur Shāh I and his successor, again found in the Rajputs the spirit of responsive co-operation. The folly of losing their support, therefore, was entirely on the side of the Emperors. Who, except a politically blind and bankrupt people, would have failed to enlist the sympathy and support of a race that possessed the chivalrous qualities of the Rajputs? Even in their degenerate days, under the later Mughals, when an Imperial army that had been sent to conquer them was dying of thirst in the deserts of Rajputana, the noble Rajputs offered their enemies water to drink, before they stood up to fight them! Few countries can boast of such chivalry; add to this Rāja Todar Mal's '*Bandobast*' which was the sheet-anchor of the Mughal revenue system, and we have the best contributions of the Rajputs to the Mughal Empire, not to speak of the influence of their art.

The Rajputs, by their very geographical situation, were called upon to lead the Hindu opposition against Islamic dominion in Hindustan. But their chivalrous instincts and traditions, coming into contact with the tact and statesmanship of Akbar, enabled the two to effect a compromise which proved on the whole beneficial to both and the country at large. This state of social and political equilibrium, though disturbed by Aurangzeb to a very large extent, was restored in some degree under his successors. Rajputana had become a *subah* of the Mughal Empire, its Rājas held a proud position in the hierarchy of the Mughal nobility, and the Rajputs seemed to have acquiesced in this position. Their wars under Aurangzeb and later were only defensive wars intended to preserve their isolated independence within the four corners of their desert land.

Even then, when the hand was proffered them, they did not fail to co-operate with any of the Court parties, chiefly the Hindustani party. As we have seen, even the proud and intrepid Ajit Singh and Durgādās accepted *mansabs* under the Emperors and gave a daughter in marriage to the Mughal ; Mādho Singh came to the succour of the Emperor when his own *wazīr* had rebelled against him. But the Empire's relations with the Marathas were of a very different order altogether.

The Maratha led the Hindu reaction against the Muslims both in the Deccan and in the North ; and on the whole their resistance was more determined than that of the Rajputs or any other non-Muslim community in Hindustan. The Sikhs, the Jāts and the Satnāmis also fought against the Mughals, but their opposition never amounted to anything more than a minority struggling to maintain its religious or political rights. None of them challenged the Imperial pretensions of the Mughals. This task was reserved for the Marathas to pursue to the end ; and although they did not succeed in establishing a lasting Maratha Empire in India (this failure being due to a variety of causes extraneous to the Mughal Empire) they yet proved the most potent external instrument that wrought the ruin of the Mughals in India. How this was achieved has been shown in the body of this work, and no purpose would be served in recounting the tale. But a few comments on the main phases of the struggle should prove useful.

The great Shivāji represented the very soul of the resurgence in Mahārāshtra. The history of this mighty movement and the political struggles that ensued from it are bristling with controversies. It is beyond the scope of these comments to discuss them. Likewise, it is to be remembered that the Hindu renaissance in Mahārāshtra, which carried the Marathas beyond their own homelands, was a complex movement, the positive sides of which it is not our purpose to describe here. A mere political movement would not have

appealed to the temperamentally tame and ignorant Māwal peasants and shepherds ; nor a merely predatory instinct enabled them to sustain their dominion over the larger part of India during more than a century. We agree with Rānadé that " Like the Protestant Reformation in Europe in the 16th century there was a religious, social and literary revival and reformation in India, but notably in the Deccan in the 15th and 16th centuries . . . . This religious revival was also of the people, of the masses, and not of the classes. At its head were saints and prophets, poets and philosophers, who sprang chiefly from the lower orders of society, tailors, carpenters, potters, gardeners, shopkeepers, barbers, and even scavengers, more often than Brahmans."<sup>1</sup> It was this popular and all-sided awakening that was at the root of the Maratha movement, however clumsy its political manifestation might have appeared at times and places. To lose sight of this factor is to miss the true import of a mighty force which determined to a large extent the fate of the Mughal Empire. If the Marathas were mere plunderers, like the pindaries, of a later period, the Mughal Emperors would have blotted them out as did the British. That even a veteran general like Aurangzeb, with all his resources in men and money, could not so stamp them out, alone should suffice to show the deep-rooted and dynamic character of the Maratha rising. " Thus," as Sir Jadunath Sarkar has well pointed out, " a remarkable community of language, creed and life was attained in Mahārāshtra in the 17th century even before political unity was conferred by Shivāji. What little was wanting to the solidarity of the people was supplied by his creation of a national state, the long struggle with the invader from Delhi under his sons, and the imperial expansion of the race under the Peshwas. Thus in the end a tribe,—or rather a collection of tribes and castes,—was fused into a *nation*, and by the end of the 18th century a Maratha people in the political and cultural senses

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1. *The Rise of the Maratha Power*, p. 140.

of the term had been formed, though caste distinctions still remained."<sup>1</sup>

A remarkable demonstration, both of the strength of the movement and of its self-directing energy, was made during the crisis with which Mahārāshtra was faced at the death of Sambhāji. The magnitude of this trial was not less than that which France had to face in the early days of its conversion into a republic. Suddenly, in both countries, the King was removed (though in each case by an altogether different cause), and the people were called upon to shoulder the dual responsibilities of internal administration and external attack. That the movement did not collapse under this crisis, but rather gathered momentum and turned the tide against the enemy, was a clear proof of its essentially national character. It is surprising, therefore, in the face of this to find a writer like Sir Jadunath Sarkar declaring that "The cohesion of the peoples in the Maratha State was not organic but artificial, accidental, and therefore precarious. It was solely dependent on the ruler's extraordinary personality and disappeared when the country ceased to produce supermen."<sup>2</sup> We are not here engaged in analysing the causes of Maratha failure in their period of decline, but rather concerned with the sources of their strength in the period of their power; because this power contributed largely to the break up of the Mughal Empire.

The above observation with regard to the want of cohesion in the State could be more appropriately made with reference to the Empire of the Mughals. The unity of that structure was certainly not organic but artificial, because it was superimposed. It was solely dependent on the ruler's extraordinary personality and disappeared when the *dynasty* ceased to produce supermen. As regards the Marathas, for nearly two

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1. *Shivji*, pp. 17-18.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 485, 86.

centuries, they did produce a wonderful succession of 'super-men' and 'superwomen' who with a remarkable tenacity of purpose overthrew the dominion which had excited their wrath. Hence, there was an essential contrast between the Marathas and the Mughal Empire: the former produced supermen and superwomen because there was among them a genuinely *national* movement, dynamic in its creative energy; the latter was a fabric that was sought to be woven, no doubt by the hands of supermen, but supermen that had an exotic origin, and had to be produced by the ever-declining vitality of a single family of rulers transplanted in a new soil.

The Marathas were, no doubt, lucky in having to confront the Mughals, for the most part, in the period of their decline, unlike the Rajputs who had to face them in the period of their freshness. But a large part of their zeal was evoked by the political domination of the Sultans of the Deccan, on the one hand, and the religious fanaticism of Aurangzeb, on the other. The reaction in Mahārāshtra was therefore both political and religious; it was as it were, the child of these two parents. Hence, in its outward manifestation, it took the shape of a Hindu rebellion against the Islamic State. Its typical apostle was Swāmi Rāmdās and its typical protagonist Shivāji. The advice of the former to the latter is contained in the following lines :—

तीर्थ क्षेत्रे मोडिलीं । ब्राह्मण स्थाने भ्रष्ट झालीं ।  
सकळ पृथ्वी आंदोळली । धर्म गेला ॥

(Places of pilgrimage have been destroyed; homes of the Brahmans have been desecrated; the whole earth is agitated; *Dharma is gone.*)

मराठा तितका मेळवावा ।  
आपुला महाराष्ट्रधर्म वाढवावा ॥

(Marathas should be mobilised; our *Mahārāshtra-dharma* ought to be propagated.)

बहुत लोक मेळवावे ।

एक विचारें भरावे ।

कष्टें करून घसरावें । म्लेच्छांवरी ॥

(Rally all people ; fill them with a singleness of purpose ; sparing no effort, fall upon the *Mlechhas*).

Chivalry in war towards the enemy was the distinctive virtue of the Rajput. The Maratha had little scruple in taking his adversary at a disadvantage. But the Rajput (e.g. Ajit Singh is alleged to have) retaliated Muslim fanaticism with the destruction of the mosques and the oppression of the Muslims. Shivāji's conduct in this respect was exemplary ; and his model appears to have been kept up on the whole by the Marathas. The testimony of Khāfī Khān (who calls Shivāji "hell-dog" and "sharp son of the devil") regarding this should suffice : 'He made it a rule that whenever his followers went plundering, they should do no harm to the mosques, the Book of God, or the woman of anyone. Whenever a copy of the sacred *Kurān* came into his hands he treated it with respect and gave it to some of his Musalman followers. When the women of any Hindu or Muhammadan were taken prisoners by his men, he watched over them until their relations came with a suitable ransom to buy their liberty.' Likewise does he state, 'Shivāji had always striven to maintain the honour of the people in his territories. He persevered in a course of rebellion, in plundering caravans and troubling mankind ; but he entirely abstained from other disgraceful acts, and was careful to maintain the honour of women and children of Muhammadans when they fell into his hands. His injunctions upon this point were very strict, and anyone who disobeyed them received punishment.'<sup>1</sup> It is not averred here that such purity and nobility of conduct were adhered to very punctiliously by the Marathas at all times. Perhaps the extent of their adherence was the measure of their success or at any rate the justification of their conquests.

1. E. & D., op. cit., VII, pp. 260, 305.

The inveterate hatred of the Marathas that had marked Aurangzeb's relations with them terminated with his death. It is hazardous to guess what turn their relations would have taken if Aurangzeb had treated Shivaji as Akbar had done with most of the Rajputs. The difference in the character of the Marathas and the Rajputs, as a people, would count for much in such a calculation. However, with the accession of Bahādur Shāh I on the throne of Delhi, and of Rājah Shāhu in Mahārāshtra, we enter upon a new phase in their mutual relations : better understanding, if not friendship, takes the place of suspicion and hatred. The personal characters of both the sovereigns, perhaps, had much to do with this *rapprochement* ; both were amiable monarchs and were not, evidently, obsessed with their predecessor's antagonisms. This attitude was turned to good account by the diplomatic abilities of the Peshwas, who now to a large extent determined the policy of the Marathas towards the Mughal Empire.

Bahādur Shāh's concessions to Shāhu were the first fruits of this change. The vantage thus gained was further confirmed and consolidated by the Marathas, in the period of confusion that followed the death of Bahādur Shāh I. They now became the virtual masters of, not only their home-provinces, but also of some of the districts they had conquered from the Mughal Empire. With this leverage, under the second of the Peshwas, Bāji Rao I, they pushed forward in all directions within the Mughal dominion. More than anything else, they realised the weakness of the Mughal Empire and, in the words of Bāji Rao, *decided to strike at the trunk of the tree*, being convinced that its withered branches would fall off as a matter of course. We have observed how the Empire, divided against itself, could not stand against the diplomatic and military incursions of the Marathas. Far from being considered its enemies, they were soon welcomed as its saviours, little reckoning that the Marathas were making good every opportunity to feather their own nests. The good-for-nothing Emperors as well as their corrupt and self-seeking ministers

and nobles, each in his own way, unwittingly perhaps, but none the less with the certainty of Fate, furthered the cause most dear to the hearts of the Marathas. The latter became willing instruments in the game of King-making, fatal to the one and fateful to the other. This involved a dual consequence : the Marathas had to shoulder the responsibility of the defence of India against an external invader like Ahmad Shāh Abdālī, on the one hand, and to face the jealousy of their Muslim rivals in India, on the other. They heroically faced both, with what result need not be adjudged here. So far as the Mughal Empire was concerned, it was completely at their mercy. To mention only the last, the Emperor Alamgīr II was murdered with their connivance, his stop-gap successor was placed on the throne by Sadāshiv Rao Bhāu, during his ephemeral dictatorship at Delhi, and finally the fugitive Shāh Alam II was restored to the capital of his ancestors by Mahādji Sindhia. Even the very last of the Mughal 'Emperors', Bahādur Shāh II, was supported by the last of the Peshwas' representative, Nānā Sāheb, and both fell together.

In 1858 the last of the Mughal Emperors was condemned by the English for high treason against the Empire & their Company's Government, and exiled ; the Europeans. at the same time, the last claimant for power on behalf of the Peshwas, Nānā Sāheb, absconded in order to escape the wrath of the same English Government in India. Thus the two great powers—the Mughals and Marathas—were finally superseded in their dominion by an European government at one and the same time. But the English were not the first Europeans to enter India. The Portuguese Vasco da Gama had landed on the Malabar Coast at Calicut in 1498—three hundred and sixty years before the momentous happenings above referred to. The history of these 360 years, read from the point view of the rise of British Dominion in India, is remarkable even in the chequered annals of this country. These years saw the rise and fulfilment of the Mughal dominion, as well as its decline and fall, together with



that of the Marathas ; they also witnessed the adventures—commercial, missionary and political—of a multitude of European powers : Portuguese, Dutch, Danish, French, German and Flemish, besides the English. Neither the rivalries of these powers, fascinating in themselves, nor the causes of the ultimate triumph of the last named, form the subject of our scrutiny here.<sup>1</sup> But the representatives of all these nationalities, as well as others not mentioned here (like the Italian, Spanish, Greek, Armenian and Turkish), had vital contacts with the Mughal Empire in a variety of ways which are worthy of notice even in a general review such as is attempted in this brief Resumé.

So far as the Mughal Empire was concerned, the national distinctions between the various Europeans were of little account. With the exception of the Turk or Rumi they were all infidels, Christians or Firangian. For our purposes, therefore, it is both desirable and historically more accurate, to speak of the Europeans as a whole, rather than of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English, etc. However, to be fair, the nationality of each party cited must be borne in mind, though only as a subordinate factor. Perhaps, it will also be convenient to consider the relations of the Empire with the Europeans under the following heads : (1) Commercial, (2) Missionary, (3) Political, and (4) Miscellaneous.

It was Europe accustomed to the luxuries of 'the gorgeous East' that, finding its customary route

(1) Commercial. blocked by the Turk, sought new ways of reaching Asia. These endeavours resulted in two great discoveries, among several, which have shaped the destinies of both the East and the West since. The discovery of America by Columbus, in 1492, and of India by Vasco da Gama, in 1498, were both momentous events in the history of the world. The former, being an undeveloped continent, led to a scramble

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1. For this purpose the Reader is referred to Major B. D. Basu's *Rise of the Christian Power in India* and Thompson and Garratt's *Rise and Fulfilment of British Dominion in India*, as also *The Cambridge History of India*.

for colonies among European nations ; the latter having settled governments and an ancient commerce, naturally led to commercial rivalries. The Portuguese having been first in the field, as a matter of course, reaped the first advantages. But they were not satisfied with mere commerce ; their missionary zeal and political ambitions made their relations with the Muslim states rather complex and complicated. They had acquired a strong footing on the West Coast with their conquest of Goa, in 1510, and their relations were at first confined to their neighbouring kingdoms of Gujarat, Bijapur, Vijayanagar, etc. Akbar was the first of the Mughal Emperors to come into direct contact with them. Their relations with them have already been traced in some detail earlier in this book. From a commercial point of view, these relations were on the whole very friendly, resulting in advantages to both parties. The Mughals, being essentially a land-power, had no navy to speak of ; hence, they were obliged to be friendly towards the Portuguese and other Europeans who could easily disturb their pilgrim and other traffic on the West Coast. Despite this consideration, however, under Shāh Jahān and Aurangzeb particularly, the harmony between the Empire and the Portuguese was broken by the close association of the latter with piracy, both in the Arabian Sea and in the Bay of Bengal. This constitutes a dark chapter in the history of European doings in the East which involved the Dutch and the English as well. Not satisfied with the legitimate profits of commerce they ventured into the shady regions of privateering, evaded the customs and other duties of the Empire and thereby brought down upon themselves the might of the local or central authorities. Otherwise, the Europeans of all nationalities participated in the rich trade of the Empire through their 'factories' scattered throughout the Mughal dominions and outside, along the coasts as well as inland.

A few glimpses of this have been given in the body of this work, such as the account from Bernier. Tavernier, Manucci and other contemporary European sojourners in

India also throw ample light upon the European commerce of this period, as well as the rivalries, mutual recriminations and jealousies of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English, in their scramble for the patronage of the Great Mughal. From the Dutch records we have cited a passage indicating the protection that even the fanatical Aurangzeb afforded the European factories after Shivāji's sack of Surat. Sir Thomas Roe and the host of English ambassadors visited the Emperors only to secure such patronage. In short, the history of the English in India is the story of the transformation of a company of traders into the rulers of this paradise of commerce ; that story also involving the discomfiture of both their European rivals and the Indian rulers, including the Mughal Emperors.

One of the secrets of the success of the English was their non-interference in religious matters. In  
 (2) Missionary this they were guided both by the traditions  
 Activities. of their own country and the warning of the Portuguese example. In tracing the history of the Jesuit missions to the Court of Akbar, we noticed how the Portuguese and their instruments, the Jesuit missionaries, tried to serve the interests of both this world and the next ; in other words, they aimed at the establishment in India of a firm and lasting Christian dominion. The attempt to convert the Mughal Emperor, as a thin end of the missionary wedge, failed after Akbar and Jahāngīr. Under Shāh Jahān and Aurangzeb set in a Muslim reaction. But, from a religious point of view, the Christians as such did not suffer even under the bigoted Alamgīr. The treaty between this Defender of the Muslim Faith and the Portuguese, given in the Appendix, is, therefore, of peculiar interest. The extent of patronage shown to the missionaries under other Emperors of the house of Bābur was extraordinary ; it looks even excessive and obsequious when we remember the times in which they lived. They were the honoured guests of the Emperors ; they enjoyed privileges which were the envy of the Mughal nobility ; Christian effigies and symbols were received within the Imperial palaces ;

Princes of the Imperial house were allowed to be baptised, and churches to be built at Agra, Lahore and other Imperial cities, preaching and proselytising were freely permitted, and the Gospels were translated into Persian under Imperial auspices. Jesuit fathers like Manrique and Xavier were even appointed tutors to the Princes; and the careers of Mirza Zu'lqarnain<sup>1</sup> and Donna Juliana<sup>2</sup> indicate the extent of Christian influence under the later Mughals. Even instances of the reconversion of Christian fugitives, after their conversion to Islam, are not wanting. The 'persecutions' under Shāh Jahān and Aurangzeb have been demonstrated to be not religious but provoked by the political intransigence of the Portuguese.

The political proclivities of the Portuguese have already been alluded to. Though less decided, the  
 (3) Political. other Europeans were not lacking in political ambition. The exertions of Dupleix to found a French Empire in India are well known. Sir Thomas Roe had warned the East India Company against diverting their energies into wasteful and precarious channels such as the Portuguese had done. But, as we have noticed, there were other Englishmen like Sir Josiah Childe who believed in the possibilities of establishing a lasting English dominion in India. Though the attempts of that generation failed, for the time being, the ultimate achievements of the British have demonstrated the essential soundness of that dream. We have not the space to deal with all the political escapades of the English and their European fore-runners in this direction; but the trend of European ambitions in India, especially during the declining days of the Mughal Empire, is indicated by the following passage from Bolt's *Considerations of the Affairs of Bengal*<sup>3</sup> :—

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1. Maclagan, op. cit., pp. 170-77.

2. Ibid., pp. 181-87.

3. Cited by Basu, op. cit., p. 44 (2nd ed.).

"The Mughal Empire is overflowing with gold and silver. She has always been feeble and defenceless. It is a miracle that no European Prince with a maritime power has ever attempted the conquest of Bengal. By a single stroke infinite wealth might be acquired, which would counterbalance the mines of Brazil and Peru. *The Policy of the Mughals is bad ; their army is worse ; they are without a navy. The Empire is exposed to perpetual revolts. Their ports and rivers are open to foreigners. The country might be conquered, or laid under contribution, as easily as the Spaniards overwhelmed the naked Indians of America.*

"A rebel subject, named Ali Verdi Khān, has torn away the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from the Moghul Empire. He has treasure to the value of thirty million sterling. His yearly income must be at least two millions. The provinces are open to the sea. Three ships with fifteen hundred or two thousand regulars would suffice for the undertaking. The British nation would co-operate for the sake of the plunder and the promotion of their trade."

We stumble against Europeans of all descriptions throughout the history of the Mughal Empire in India from the moment of Akbar's first acquaintance with them at Cambay. Besides traders, missionaries and political agents, they appear also as mercenaries, physicians, surgeons, distillers,<sup>1</sup> engineers, gunners, pirates and impostors. This miscellaneous lot came from all nationalities of Europe. They were acting as individuals mostly, or perhaps in groups, but always representing themselves, and not any national or responsible organisation. Still, the times were such, that even their more respectable compatriots in India often winked at their doings, because they were helpful in their own way in pushing forward the cause of the Europeans in this country. The support derived from

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1. Europeans had often the monopoly of this trade. See Manucci, op. cit., p. 50.

these insidious forces in building up European enterprise, whether commercial, military or political, is not to be lost sight of. The European on that account was both feared and respected, if not also looked upon with suspicion. In relation to the Empire, or rather the Emperors, we come across great missionaries like Manrique, Aquaviva and Xavier, high political and commercial emissaries like Mildenhall, Roe and Hawkins, La Boulle le Gouz and Bebbler,<sup>1</sup> individual adventurers like Manucci, disinterested travellers like Bernier and Tavernier, Mughal officials like Zu'lqarnain and god-mothers like Donna Juliana. In the writings of some of these, we have pen-portraits of a host of European path-finders who have directly and indirectly contributed to the destruction of the Mughal Empire and the raising of a new edifice out of its ruins.

#### THE LEGACY OF THE EMPIRE

A tree, it is said, is judged by the fruit it bears. Having surveyed in some detail the history of the Mughal Empire in India, the question that naturally arises in our minds is, *What fruit did that Empire bear?* We have witnessed its seed planted by Bābur, the sapling uprooted under Humāyūn, replanted in a soil weeded and enriched by the labours of Sher Shāh, nurtured at the hands of Akbar, bearing fruit under Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān—a golden harvest, perhaps, which yellowed in the autumn of Aurangzeb's rule, then withered rapidly in the winter of the 'later Mughal' regime, its branches either falling or hacked off to prevent the rot, which had set in at its roots, reaching its surviving parts. The Marathas struck at its rotten trunk which could not be propped up with all the efforts of the Afghans, Najīb Khān and Ahmad Shāh Abdālī. Its revivifying offshoots were smothered either by the Marathas or by the English. An English oak now stands where once stood an Indian banyan. The Nizām's dominions alone survive to-day to remind us of its several *subhas*. But this to all out-

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1. Duarte, on "The first French Embassy to the Mughal Court", in *The Times of India Annual*, 1935.

ward seeming ; the discerning eye might still see the entire past at our doors. The best and the worst of the Mughal legacy is in our very midst.

It would take us very long, indeed, to prepare a full inventory of our multitudinous heritage, but a few categories might be suggested as samples. We shall consider this subject, therefore, under the following heads : (1) The Political Legacy ; (2) the Economic Legacy ; (3) the Social Legacy ; and (4) the Cultural Legacy.

This is perhaps the most delicate of all the issues involved in our study to be discussed with the frankness that the subject demands. The present is never entirely the legacy of the past ; it is the outcome of a multiplicity of causes among which contemporary forces are undoubtedly the most dynamic. Nevertheless, it is not to be denied that the legacy of the past—especially the more recent past—is one of the most potent influences at work in shaping our future, for better or for worse. Hence, a candid recognition of our indebtedness to the past (mixed as it is in its character) is a desideratum to progress. To cite only the most recent acknowledgment of this, the *Report of the Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform* (1933-34)<sup>1</sup> states, “ The arts of government and administration were not indeed unknown to the earlier Hindu Kings, and the strong hand of the Mogul Emperors who reigned between 1526 and 1707 maintained a State which ultimately embraced the larger part of India and did not suffer by comparison with, if it did not even surpass in splendour, the contemporary monarchies in Europe.”

This “ splendour ” was not merely a deceptive glow, as is often represented, but the true luminosity of a radiant object. It will not be forgotten, however, that there are black spots even in the sun ; and in the words<sup>2</sup> of the Report above cited,

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1. Vol. I. Part 1, p. 3. (Italics mine).

2. Referring to the British achievement in India.—Ibid.,

“Though we claim for it neither infallibility nor perfection, since, like all systems of government, it has, at times, fallen into error, it is well to remember the greatness of its achievement.” We might also caution the reader against the not too infrequent habit of judging the Mughals by the standards of our own times rather than by theirs ; and secondly to remember that there is always a disparity between the promise and the fulfilment, whether in the medieval or in the modern governments of all countries. Yet, like the British, the Mughals, although they were foreigners, gradually (perhaps more rapidly) worked up towards popular acceptance. The measure of their success or failure is not without instruction to our generation.

The predominant trait of the Mughal rulers of India was their political instinct, if by this we understand the passion for conquest and the desire to rule. All their virtues and vices as rulers are traceable to this source. The adventurous Bābur, the vacillating Humāyūn, the determined Akbar, the self-indulgent Jahāngīr, the imperious Shāh Jahān and the dogged Aurangzeb displayed this character to an eminent degree, each in his own individual manner. Even under the later Mughals, most of whom were far advanced in age when they ascended the throne, we witness their love of campaigning as with Bahādur Shāh I, their unconquerable spirit as in the proud declaration of sorrow by Kām Bakhsh at his being captured alive, their propensity to govern as in the peurile appointment of infants to high offices in which the imbecile Ahmad Shāh indulged, and in the maintenance of all the regalia of their once imperious state by the last of the Mughals, even when the “Emperor” was not master of his own person. The training of Princes of the ruling house to bear Imperial responsibilities, on the one hand, and their ruthless oppression of all other instincts in their one consuming passion to ascend the throne, on the other, were indications of the same trait. The successive revolts of the Mughal Princes and their declaration, not merely of independence but of their assumption of the insignia of the Emperor, were equally symptomatic of that identical



characteristic. Akbar's conception of the union of secular and spiritual sovereignty in his own person, looked at in the light of this political instinct to rule, appears but as the obverse of which Aurangzeb's fanatical idea of a Muslim State' was the reverse. The one pointed the way to success, the other to failure; hence Mr. Pringle Kenedy's philosophic warning to his countrymen—quoted earlier—"The English won India by pursuing the methods of Akbar, let them not lose it by imitating those of Aurangzeb."

The essence of Political genius lies in the spirit of compromise, the capacity to understand divergences of interest, the ability to assimilate and synthesise. The Mughals showed these virtues eminently, generation after generation, during their rule of over two centuries in India. Bābur and Humāyūn, though of an essentially religious frame of mind, could subordinate their sectarian loyalties to political exigencies seeing that they could gain the support of Persia only by changing their creed from Sunni to Shia. Akbar, not less intensely (perhaps more truly) religious than Aurangzeb, saw at once, with the unerring insight of a statesman, both the true essence of all religions and the vital requirements of the political situation. He, of all rulers of India, seemed to have grasped the secret of welding into a national harmony the composite and discordant elements dwelling within this "warring world of Hindustan," and honestly attempted to "alchemise old hates into the gold of Love, and make it current."

Aurangzeb, the very embodiment of an uncompromising "die-hard" in matters religious, could still keep in high command powerful Rajput generals and diplomats like Jaswant Singh and Jai Singh, and refrain from either killing or converting Shāhu, the son of Sambhāji, who was completely at his mercy. Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān and all the other Mughals, whatever their personal leanings, on the whole maintained the eminently practical policy of Akbar, with negligible exceptions.

As a result of this, the conception of a National State was possible, a State in which all sects of Muslims and all castes of

Hindus, foreigners and Indians alike, could find employment for their talents, whether they belonged to the ruling race or not. In modern times, strange to say, under more enlightened auspices this ideal is yet to be reached by "progressive" stages in some distant future. The reason for this is not far to seek. The English came to India as traders; their instincts, unlike those of the Mughals, were for making large profits. Although the Company of traders has ceased to rule India, their compatriots who hold the destiny of this country in their hands, have not ceased altogether to look at this *Eldorado* with the eyes of their ancestors; hence the "safeguards." The spirit of Queen Victoria's magnanimous Proclamation is being retailed to us in the pettifogging scales of traders. The enlightened trust and confidence which Akbar's policy breathed is checked every now and then by the shrinking suspicions of an Aurangzeb. This is due to the essential difference between the two: the Mughals settled in this country and made this land their own. (There was therefore a complete identity of interests between the rulers and the ruled—at least to the extent it was possible under a monarchy, and a medieval monarchy at that. In their subjects' contentment lay their best security. After a generation or two the Mughals became *Indians*.) They made this country their *patria* and did not look forward to enjoying their pensions or their profits away in distant homes. Hence they employed native Indians in all departments of the State, both civil and military, without restriction and without any racial discrimination. They needed no safeguards because they had nothing to keep away safely from their subjects, excepting their throne; but even this evoked a genuine loyalty (except under Aurangzeb) because the person who occupied it was not unoften the son of a Muslim father and a Hindu mother (though never *vice versa*); the throne itself and the palace in which it stood displayed the workmanship of Hindu and Muslim craftsmen; the wealth which made it possible, and partly was made possible by it, came from Hindu and Muslim coffers, collected by Hindu, and Muslim officers; as also were the armies that

defended them all, manned and officered by Hindu, Muslim, foreign and Indian men, selected on a basis of merit rather than of race. In short, as Lord William Bentinck confessed—  
“In many respects, the Mahammedans surpassed our (British) rule ; they settled in the countries which they conquered ; they intermixed and intermarried with the natives ; they admitted them to all privileges ; the interests and sympathies of the conquerors and the conquered became identical. Our (British) policy, on the contrary, has been the reverse of this,—cold, selfish and unfeeling.”<sup>1</sup>

We and the British have been the common inheritors of this legacy in India. Through the acquisition of the Diwani and other rights of the Mughal *subah* of Bengal, by the Company of traders, the administrative institutions of the Mughal Empire were transmitted to the British dominion in India ; but these—by the flux of time and circumstances, have been transformed almost beyond recognition now. Still, the original ground-work is visible in some parts ; our provincial and district administrations are derived from Mughal prototypes ; the powers of our externally appointed governors and viceroys, not altogether responsive to the chords of national life, are the relics of a past that is still living ; our Civil Service, composed of men-of-all-work Imperially selected to administer Imperial as well as local interests, still reminds us of the *mansabdars*, shorn of course of their feudal military character and functions, and selected on more scientific lines ; our legal system is modern, but some of our laws are derived from codes prevalent in Mughal times ; our revenue system is a direct descendant of the Mughal organisation ; our army is manned mostly by Indians, no doubt, but is largely officered, financed and controlled by an authority not more responsible to the people for whose defence it is ostensibly maintained than was the Mughal army ; and finally, the salaries of our governors, viceroys and our secret service men, just as they are

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1. *The Modern Review*, Dec. 1907 (Calcutta).

still on the Grand Mughal scale, are controlled as well by a power that has stepped into the shoes of the great Mughals.

This is not to denounce the present administration, but only to point out the historic survivals of a system that still persists despite the well-meaning efforts of an enlightened nation that is making the unique experiment of engrafting occidental democracy on an oriental stalk. Perhaps it could not have been otherwise in the nature of things, as the progenitors of the present government, consciously and deliberately, aimed at emulating the Mughals, as may be inferred from the following passage from a despatch of Warren Hastings, recommending to the Court of Directors of the East India Company the publication of Gladwin's translation of the *Ain-i-Akbari* :

The work, says the Minute, "will serve to assist the judgment of the Court of Directors on many points of Importance to the first interests of the Company. It will shew where the measures of their administration approached to the first principles, *which, perhaps, will be found superior to any that have been built on their ruins*, and certainly most easy, as the most familiar to the minds of the people, and when any deviation from them may be likely to counteract, or to assimilate with them."<sup>1</sup>

But, if Mughal survivals are to be traced in comparatively purer forms they might be found perhaps in our Indian States. For, as Sir Jadunath Sarkar has observed, "The two hundred years of Mughal rule, ... gave to the whole of northern India and to much of the Deccan also, oneness of official language, administrative system and coinage, and also a popular *lingua franca* for all classes except the Hindu priests and the stationary village folk. *Even outside the territory directly administered by the Mughal Emperors, their administrative system, official titles, Court etiquette, and monetary*

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1. Gladwin, *Ayeeen Akbery*, ed. by Jagdish Mukhopadhyaya (Calcutta, 1906 ?), Preface, p. v.

*type were borrowed, more or less, by the neighbouring Hindu rajahs.*" He further points out, "All the twenty Indian *subahs* of the Mughal Empire were governed by exactly the same administrative machinery, with exactly the same procedure and official titles. Persian was the one language used in all official records, etc. . . . Officials and soldiers were frequently transferred from one province to another. Thus, the native of one province felt himself almost at home in another province; traders and travellers passed most easily from city to city, *subah* to *subah*, and all realised the imperial oneness of this vast country."<sup>1</sup>

No extensive survey, adequate or satisfactory in itself, of the economic conditions in the Mughal Empire, is possible in a brief and general review like this. What is aimed at, therefore, is to give some idea of the continuity of our present economic life, with reference to our heritage from those times. India at present occupies a high and honoured place in the commerce of the world. Although her trade-history dates from very ancient times, her modern prestige is largely derived from the days of the Mughals. In more recent times, no doubt, our trade has grown considerably in volume and also changed in character; but many of the conditions that have contributed to this transformation are directly traceable from the history under study.

In the first place, such valuable commercial traditions as our country undoubtedly possesses, presuppose the existence of economic prosperity; secondly, it is also axiomatic that such prosperity itself could not exist without there being continuous peace over stretches of time and country. We are too aware of the wars and rebellions, piracies and dacoities, famines and pestilences that punctuated the annals of the Mughals in India, to exaggerate the extent of that peace and prosperity; but, when due allowance is made for all such accidents, in the

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1. *Mughal Administration*, pp. 238-39.

history of those two hundred years and more, we have a clear balance in favour of an economic surplus. If it had been otherwise, the numerous Europeans who flocked to this country would have left our shores long ago, as mice do a sinking ship.<sup>1</sup> The East India Company built up the British Empire in India out of this trade; and its "nabobs", in service and in retirement, stimulated the Industrial Revolution in all its phases in England. In a sense, a substantial part of the political and economic greatness of England has risen out of the Mughal Empire.

The Mughals themselves were comparative strangers to the sea, and did not therefore, perhaps, pay as much attention to the creation of a fleet as the situation increasingly demanded. There are, however, references in the *Ain-i-Akbari* to the 'Admiralty', ship-building and the shipping trade, regulation of customs, etc., though most of this must have reference to river traffic. The Tamils and the Maplahs of Malabar were used to a sea-faring life, but their adventurous spirits were not harnessed by the Mughals, perhaps on account of their Empire not having extended far enough to include them. One contemporary writer has affirmed that "the Mogul's ships carry greater Burdens than those of Europe, . . . . They use neither the Compass nor Quadrant, but sail from India to Persia, Bassora, Mocha, Mozambick, Mombasa, Sumatra, Maccassar, and other Places, only by the help of the North-Star, and the Rising and Setting of the Sun."<sup>2</sup> But more and more, particularly under the later Mughals, the trade with Europe was carried on in foreign bottoms, and the Mughals found themselves increasingly at the mercy of the Europeans even to defend the shores of the Empire from pirates, as also the pilgrim traffic to Arabia. That this legacy of comparative neglect of the marine and naval

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1. Cf. Chabiani, *The Economic Conditions of India during the XVII Century*, pp. 69-71.

2. See Pant, *The Commercial Policy of the Moghuls*, p. 270. For a fuller note on the subject see Appendix IV below.

requirements of India has duly come down to our own times is apparent from our subsequent maritime history. The following abstract from *The Times of India* of October 2, 1934, will be read with interest and profit :—

“Of the forces in existence in India to-day the Royal Indian Navy (just inaugurated) must be the oldest. There has always been a sea force of some description in Indian waters from the early days of the East India Company ; in fact, the present Indian Navy was born in 1612 when the newly formed Company sent a squadron of four ships under Captain Thomas Best to trade with the country. Though the vessels were merely merchantmen, they were quite capable of defending themselves—a necessary provision considering that the Portuguese had already been here for nearly a hundred years.

“As a matter of fact, Best's squadron was not long in showing what it could do. It anchored in Surat Roads and immediately afterwards, in a three-days battle, defeated the Portuguese. *These apparently so impressed the Emperor Jehangir that he granted the British squadron a firman to trade.*

“The Mogul Emperor's interest in the force did not lapse after the first affair at Surat, and *from 1759 to 1829 a Captain of the Indian Marine was appointed annually to the post of Admiral to the Mughal Emperor, with head-quarters at Surat, in order to defend Moghul trading vessels. The officer fortunate enough to hold the post received about Rs. 85,000 for his year's service.*”

The East India Company's marine had therefore to do service as the “Indian Navy”, while the Mughal Emperor's marine conscience was satisfied with the payment of Rs. 85,000 to his “Captain of the Indian Marine.” That the same attitude has been maintained by the British Government in India is clear from the fact that since 1863, “*it was decided on grounds of economy to abolish the Indian Navy as it stood and*

*turn the defence of Indian waters over to the Royal Navy (of Great Britain). India subscribed £ 100,000 a year as its share along with other dominions and colonies for empire defence."*

The nucleus of the Indian Navy now inaugurated (Oct. 1934) "At present consists of *four* sloops armed with 4 in. Q. F. guns, *one* building armed with the latest 4.7 in. Q. F. guns, *two* fast patrol boats and a mixed armament of 4 in. and 12 pounder guns, *one* survey vessel and *one* depot training ship. The personnel is roughly 117 officers, executive and engineer, and 1,027 other ranks . . . . . Regarding the Indianisation of the force, there are at the moment *two* Indian engineer officers and *three* Indian executive officers, and there are *two* executive and *seven* engineer cadets, all Indians, at present in England under instruction."

The main point to be noted is that, as under the Mughals, our maritime interests are still in other than Indian hands.

As regards other economic survivals from Mughal times, we might say that our internal trade still follows in the main the beaten tracks of old—the same roads and river-routes and the same vehicles and country-craft are to be found, where these have not been displaced by the railways and other modern innovations; agriculture still forms the most extensive industry and retains all the features it possessed, perhaps, in earlier than Mughal times; some of the Mughal canals still water large tracts of agricultural land, especially in the Punjab; indigenous banking and instruments and modes of exchange still operate in most parts of the country as they did in Mughal times; and the Indian coins and weights and measures, where they are not identical, are cognisable direct lineal descendants of their Mughal ancestors<sup>1</sup>. Virjee Voras and Jagat Seths of Mughal fame have their descendants still

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1. E.g. Our Rupee, the sheet-anchor of our currency to which our Government clings with inordinate attachment, is identical with the coin introduced by Sher Shah four hundred years ago.



dominating our economic life to the extent that their foreign rivals permit them to exercise their talents. The Industrial Revolution with its infinite trail of transformations still encounters, at every step in this country, obstacles bequeathed to us by the Mughal economy.

The Mughals were as bold in their social innovations as they were adventurous in the political field. To appreciate their endeavours in this direction we have to remember the character of Muslim rule in India prior to their advent, the conservative traditions of the Hindu and Muslim society in which they worked, and the nature of the times in which they lived.

No doubt theirs was the age of Nānak, Kabīr and the great socio-religious movements in all provinces ; but to initiate reforms on a comprehensive national basis, it was necessary that the attempt should be made by the Pādishāh of Hindustan and not merely by the founder of a new sect. Akbar is enshrined in our hearts even to this day because he did not shrink from the great task of attempting to found a new society in India, a new nation that would be neither Hindu nor Muslim merely, nor any other, but INDIAN. In the memorable words of Bartoli, quoted earlier, "*For an Empire ruled by one head, it was a bad thing to have the members divided among themselves, and at variance one with the other. We ought, therefore, to bring them all into one, but in such a fashion that they should be one and all, with the great advantage of not losing what is good in any one religion, while gaining whatever is better in another. In that way honour would be rendered to God, peace would be given to the peoples, and security to the Empire.*"

Society in India is essentially religious and was more so under the Mughals. Hence, the social reformer had to encounter at every step the deep-seated religious sentiments of the people, whether Hindu or Muslim. And when that reformer was an alien like Akbar, the obstacles assumed a

formidable shape. If a reformer arose among the Hindus or the Muslims themselves, however difficult his task, it did not seem quite so presumptuous, as when an Akbar attempted to transform both and fuse them into, not a new sect like the *Nānak-panthis* or *Kabīr-panthis* but a new and homogeneous NATION. We have already traced the history of his herculean endeavours in this direction, and there is no need of repetition. The prohibition of cow-killing and compulsory *sati*, the raising of the age for circumcision and marriage, the social control of drink and prostitution, the composition of sectarian differences among various communities by suggesting a common solvent, the abolition of invidious taxes based on religious differences, despite the loss to the treasury, the admission of all to equal official status, irrespective of race or creed, and above all, the encouragement of inter-marriage between such divergent communities as the Hindus and the Muslims,—were the various channels through which Akbar sought to realise his great dream : to

—“cull from every faith and race the best, . . . . .’.  
     gathering here and there  
 From each fair plant the blossom choicest grown,  
 To wreath a crown not only for the king,  
 But in due time for every Musalman,  
 Brahmin and Buddhist, Christian and Parsee,  
 Thro’ all the warring world of Hindustan. . . . .for no  
 Mirage of glory, but for power to fuse  
 My myriads into union under one, . . . .  
 And alchemise old hates into the gold  
 Of Love, and make it current.”

That dream of Akbar is still the dream of India, and that is why we cherish in our hearts the dreamer no less than the dream. For a time the orthodox Brahmin and the proud Rajput, the heterodox Shia, and even the orthodox Sunni, with a few notable exceptions, seemed to acquiesce in the great endeavour ; nay, the idealists among both communities even

looked forward to the coming of a Mahdi or the advent of a Rāmraj ! Croakers like Badaoni, of course, there were, who denounced Akbar as an apostate, but the willing acquiescence and active co-operation of the unbending Rajput in the attempted social synthesis was the measure of the reformer's success. That this did not endure in all its manifoldness throughout the Mughal regime was due to a variety of causes (the most notable being the reaction under Aurangzeb) which need not be examined here. But that the dream was cherished by successive generations is indicated by the characters of Princess Jahānara and Princes Dārā and Akbar. The re-admission into the Hindu fold of the daughter of Ajit Singh after having been Farrukh-siyar's queen until his assassination, as late as 1719, might be taken as the last historical token of this reformation started in the sixteenth century by Akbar. That enlightenment was eclipsed in the general decadence that followed, until certain aspects of it were re-emphasised by a Rājā Rām Mohan Roy, a Lord William Bentinck, a Swāmi Dayānand Saraswati in more recent times. Even the unrealised or partially realized social dream of the great Mughal is therefore one of the most valuable of his legacies to our struggling generation. The Indian National Congress is attempting to solve the very problems which the Ibādat-Khāna had failed to resolve even under the auspices of Akbar's eclectic and synthesising genius.

Mughal Culture is a very vast subject which is as alluring as it is inexhaustible. We do not seek to

(4) The Cul- dwell upon all its phases here. We have  
tural Legacy. space only for a few comments on some of  
its most striking and permanent features. The Empire of the  
Mughals has vanished for ever, but their personality endures  
in a thousand forms, visible and invisible. In our dress, speech,  
etiquette, thought, literature, music, painting and architecture  
the impress of the Mughal is ever present. It is neither  
purely Hindu nor purely Muslim, but a harmonious and  
exquisite blending of the two. The art of a people truly

reveals their soul ; and the real *Indian* art of to-day is a legacy come down to us from Mughal times. Where the earlier Muslims merely destroyed everything Hindu, the Mughals assimilated, synthesised and recreated in immortal form.

Our Hindustāni dress, both of men and women, which is so elegant, graceful, dignified and charming, when not hybridised with European misfits, is the same that we see in Mughal paintings. Our Hindustāni bearing, etiquette and forms of address, which are so majestic and yet not pompous, are a bequest to us from the Mughal courtiers and citizens. Our Hindustāni music and musical instruments are those that gave pleasure to Mughal sovereigns, sardārs and subjects alike, and derive their melodies from the soul of a melodious people. Our Hindustāni painting with its delicate touches and delightful hues is but a vivid reflection of those picturesque times. Our Hindustāni literature, whether Persian, Hindi, Sanskrit or Urdu, has come down to us with the impress of writers who either directly or indirectly enjoyed Mughal favour and patronage. And lastly, our Hindustāni architecture, whether Hindu or Muslim, instead of following radically different lines, as might have been expected, "exhibits, on the contrary, precisely the same fusion of Hindu and Muslim ideals, the same happy blend of elegance and strength." As Sir John Marshall has observed, "Seldom in the history of mankind, has the spectacle been witnessed of two civilizations, so vast and so strongly developed, yet so radically dissimilar as the Muhammadan and Hindu, meeting and mingling together. The very contrasts which existed between them, the wide divergences in their culture and their religions, make the history of their impact peculiarly instructive and lend an added interest to the art and above all to the architecture which their united genius called into being."<sup>1</sup>

The efforts of the two large communities, which were apparently hostile to each other, to bring about a social

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1. *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, pp. 568 and 640.

harmony would indeed be a very profitable field of research and must be taken up independently. But it will be noted here in passing that the spirit of the age was peculiarly favourable to such endeavours. Among the Muhammadan rulers of the several kingdoms into which the Delhi Sultanate had broken up were several who might be considered the forerunners of the Mughals in this respect. Ferishta mentions that one of the Purbiya Sultans of Gaur enlisted 5000 Hindu footmen as his body-guard;<sup>1</sup> and, according to Havell, "Muhammadan culture in Gaur, as in other parts of India, was a graft upon the old Hindu stalk and not an exotic transplanted from Arabia to Indian soil."<sup>2</sup> Likewise, at Jaunpur, under the patronage of the Sharki Sultans, mosques were built by Indian master-builders, both Hindu and Musalman. The memory of Husain Shah (1452-78) is still cherished in Bengal for his efforts to bring together the Hindu and Musalman communities, and his patronage of vernacular literature and art. The first Bengali translation of the *Bhāgavata* is said to have been done by Maladhar Vasu, by his orders; as also a translation of the *Mahābhārata*. The Sultan is also credited with founding the *Satya-Pir* cult,<sup>3</sup> a forerunner of the *Din-i-Ilahi*. The Hindu Chaitanya and the Muslim Kabir owned a large following from the Muslim and Hindu communities respectively. In the South, in the Bahamani kingdom, Brahman ministers controlled the finances of a Muslim State,<sup>4</sup> and the Vijayanagar rulers, despite their political conflicts with their Muslim neighbours, enlisted Musalmans in their armies and patronised their religion.<sup>5</sup> Prince Ibrāhīm of Golkonda (1560-81) similarly patronised Telugu literature.<sup>6</sup> In Gujarat, Malwa and Rajputana there

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1. Briggs, op. cit., IV, p. 337.

2. *Aryan Rule in India*, p. 336.

3. Sen, D. C., *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, pp. 102, 222 and 797 (cited by Havell).

4. Ferishta, op. cit., II, p. 292.

5. Saletore, *Social and Political Life in the Vijayanagar Empire*, I, pp. 395-413.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 413.

are numerous examples of the blending of the Hindu and Muslim in architecture. But perhaps the most eminent of the forerunners of Akbar was Zainu-l Abidin, Sultan of Kashmir (1417-67). Besides his abolition of the *jiziya* and the toleration of the Hindus, he encouraged literature, painting and music, and caused many translations to be made from Sanskrit, Arabic and other languages, irrespective of religion.

Under the Mughals, we find, therefore, only the fruition of this widespread tendency in a more prominent form. After a detailed survey of the history of Mughal painting, Smith observes, "Perhaps the most fruitful general observation arising from such perusal is that of the predominance of Hindu names. For instance, in the *Wāqīāt-i-Bābari*, . . . out of twenty-two names, nineteen are Hindu, and only three Muslim. Similarly, in Abul Fazl's catalogue of seventeen artists, only four are Muhammadan, while thirteen are Hindu."<sup>1</sup> As with painting so with architecture and the other arts and literature. It is not so much the number of Hindus that were employed that matters, but the fact that they were generously appreciated and patronised on a large scale and not merely as exceptions. Among the thousands of artists, artisans and master-builders that were engaged throughout the Mughal period in the construction of the numerous buildings, palaces and mosques, there were both Hindus and Muslims who worked in unison in order to produce the exquisite effects which attract to this day admiring tourists from all parts of the world. In some, as in the Jahāngīri Mahal, the Hindu type predominated; in others, as in the temples of Brindāvan, the Muslim restraint in external ornamentation showed itself. But these might be considered as experimental and tentative designs. The perfection was reached where the Hindu and the Muslim both merged their individualities in a sublime form, like that of the Tāj Mahal, which is neither Hindu nor Muslim but INDIAN.

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1. *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, p. 218 (2nd ed.).

A few words may be added on our literary and scientific heritage. Hindu mathematical works like the *Līlāvati* were translated into Persian. A Sawai Jai Singh of Amber constructed his wonderful astronomical observatories at Jaipur, Mathura, Benares and Delhi.<sup>1</sup> A Sanskrit Pandit like Jagannāth was patronised by even the comparatively orthodox Muslim Emperor Shāh Jahān. The Hindu Epics and the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* and several other works on Hindu religion and philosophy, like the *Yogavāsistha* and *Bhagavad Gītā*, were not merely translated by Muslim scholars into Persian, but were also studied with great avidity by Mughal Princes like Dārā Shukoh and even Mughal Princesses like Jahānara. Likewise was Persian literature imbibed by the Hindus in the *madrasas* which were attended by both communities alike. Rājahs Mān Singh and Todar Mal were great enthusiasts in the propagation of Persian among their co-religionists. Thus chronicles in Persian came to be written by Hindus like Ishver Dās, Bhīm Sen and Sujān Rai. A Bīrbal received the title of *Kavi Rāi* on account of his poetry; and a Sūr Dās (the blind bard of Agra) was greatly admired. As another poet of Akbar's court declared, "Gang excels in sonnets, and Bīrbal in the *kavitta* metre; Keshav's meaning is ever profound, but Sūr possesses the excellency of all three." Nevertheless, by universal acknowledgment the Emperor of Hindi literature in the age of the Mughals was Tulsī Dās. Vincent Smith has described him as "the tallest tree in the 'Magic garden' of mediæval Hindu poesy." That Hindu, he writes with admiration, "was the greatest man of his age in India—greater even than Akbar himself, inasmuch as the conquest of the hearts and minds of millions of men and women effected by the poet was an achievement infinitely more lasting and important than any or all of the victories gained in war by the monarch."<sup>2</sup>

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1. See Law, N. N., *Promotion of Learning in India* p. 196.

2. *Akbar, the Great Mogul*, p. 417.

The Mughals, no doubt, conquered Hindustan and established their Empire therein, but a survey of their culture leads one to believe that their hearts were taken captive by the spirit of other-worldliness which has been so characteristic of Hindustan in all ages.

Thus the Titan Aurangzeb sighed at the end of his days : *" Old age has arrived and weakness has grown strong ; strength has left my limbs. I came alone and am going away alone. I know not who I am and what I have been doing. The days that have been spent except in austerities have only left regret behind them. I have not at all done any (true) government of the realm or cherishing of the peasantry. Life, so valuable, has gone away for nothing. The Master has been in my house, but my darkened eyes cannot see His splendour. Life lasts not ; no trace is left of the days that are no more ; and of the future there is no hope.*

*" Whatever the wind may be,  
I am launching my boat on the water."*

The greatest of the Mughals wisely inscribed on the *Buland Darwāzā* (Fath-pur Sikri) at the end of all his glorious achievements :

*" The world is a bridge : pass over it, but build no house upon it. The world endures but an hour : spend it in prayer ; who sees the rest ? Thy greatest riches is the alms which thou hast given. Know that the world is a mirror where fortune has appeared, then fled : call nothing thine that thy eyes cannot see."*

#### THE LESSONS OF THE EMPIRE

History, it hath been said, is philosophy taught through examples. Our eminent historian, Sir Jadunath Sarkar, has declared, " History when rightly read is a justification of Providence, a revelation of a great purpose fulfilled in time." <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Short History of Aurangzib*, p. 473.



Whatever History may be, as promised in the Introduction, I have written "not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, but to weigh and consider." Nevertheless, I hope, the lessons of the Mughal Empire in India will not be lost sight of by the reader. Nothing is easier than, for us who live in power and prosperity, to judge lightly those that had their day and are no more.

*'Judge not that ye be not judged. Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you.'*

It is well for readers of the history of a fallen Empire to bear these Christian maxims in mind. But too frequently we find that, particularly foreign historians of India, in their conscious or unconscious desire to show that we moderns live in the best of times, apply to the Mughals tests and criteria that they would not apply to themselves. On the contrary, there are not a few among our own countrymen, who seek to glorify our past to such an extent that we easily become the butt of foreign ridicule. It is not to be forgotten that History hath its *inspirations* as well as *warnings*. The purpose of this Epilogue is to lay the finger on some of these.

Those who over-emphasise the military character of the Empire, either lose sight of its positive contributions to culture and civilization or deliberately overlook these in order to traduce the past. "At its best," says one writer,<sup>1</sup> "the Mughal Government sought no higher goal than the maintenance of internal order and the preservation of external peace." That the Mughal Empire was not a mere "police state" has been demonstrated beyond doubt. The State-organisation of several industries, the patronage of arts and letters and the social legislation of the Mughals, to which reference has been made already, are enough refutation of this preposterous hypothesis. That the Empire collapsed with the deterioration of its military strength is no proof in support of it; no Empire, neither ancient nor modern, could stand if the 'sanction' of

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1. Edwardes (and Garrett), *Mughal Rule in India*, p. 351.

the military and police were either weakened or removed. But at the same time, no State can endure for long if it relies on physical force alone. Aurangzeb demonstrated the futility of this beyond all doubt.

Another fallacy of a like nature is the theory that efficiency of administration in India is directly dependent on the importation of foreign talent and vigour. The gradual disappearance of this invigorating exotic element, is attributed by the writer already cited to "the policy of 'India for the Indians' enunciated by Akbar". "The Mughal dominion," says he, "was thereby deprived of its real strength, and the way was paved for 'the dead rot and corruption which normally grasp an Eastern rule, when vivifying external sources of life are stopped.'"<sup>1</sup> In the first place, this is a misreading of Akbar's policy; for Akbar, as admitted by the writer, never debarred foreigners. On the other hand, his "civil and military departments were staffed chiefly<sup>2</sup> by foreigners".<sup>3</sup> 'India for the Indians' is therefore to be interpreted as primarily in the interests of the Indians. This could by no means have contributed to the weakening of the Mughal dominion. As we have seen, Akbar's Indian policy made for its greater strength and stability; the reversal of it set it on the downward course. The fall of the Mughals was due to other causes discussed already, and not due to its 'Monroe doctrine.'

Secondly, with regard to 'the dead rot and corruption which normally grasp an *Eastern rule*,' it will be recollected that the French Monarchy of the same period was only more rotten and corrupt than the Indian. Hence 'the dead rot' is by no means a necessary concomitant of 'Eastern rule.'

1. Edwardes (and Garrett), *Mughal Rule in India*, pp. 354-55.

2. What about the Mān Singhs and Todar Mals? Badaoni, as we have noted, inveighs against the exclusion of Muslims to give most of the chief places to native infidels.

3. Edwardes, loc. cit., p. 355.

The primary lessons to be learnt from the history of the Mughal Empire in India are that (1) Monarchy was good in its day and in its own way, but India to-day wants a more broad-based government ; (2) that given the opportunity, she possesses the necessary resources and talents to shoulder such responsibilities ; (3) that, in order to avoid her mistakes of the past she should find a NATIONAL and Rational, in place of her outworn communal basis of life ; and (4) that she should remember, as Sir Jadunath has expressed, "No nation can exist in the present-day world by merely cultivating its brain, without developing its economic resources and military power to the high pitch attained by its possible enemies."<sup>1</sup>

The morning sun of the new age has risen.

Thy temple hall is filled with pilgrims.

The day is come.

But where is India ?

She lies on the dust in dishonour,  
deprived of her seat.

Remove her shame,

and give her a place in thy House of Man,

O Lord ever awake !

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

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1. *India Through the Ages*, pp. 138-39

## APPENDICES

### I

#### A MUGHAL TREATY

The following is the text of a Treaty between Aurangzeb and the Portuguese Viceroy Conde de Sao Vicente, 1667. The original document, in Persian and Portuguese, is in the Government Archives at Pangim, and consists of two pages  $16\frac{1}{2} \times 12$  inches, "in a good state of preservation, excepting the corners." (Heras)

#### DOCUMENT OF TREATY WITH THE FIRANGIS

Treaty of Alamgir, King of the Mughals, through Muhammad Allau-d din, Envoy of the Mughal King, during the time of the General Mirza Rajah Jai Singh, is given here in full detail :—

Reply to the said Envoy by Kondi San Vist, Vaisri and Captain Jaal, is given here in detail :—

1

When the subjects of the Mughal King buy anything in the Kingdom of the Firangis, there should be no customs duty or hindrance . . .

1

.... In the same way in the Mughal Kingdom, when we buy any present for the King, our master, the same should be done by them....

2

The Firangis should not shelter in their Kingdom a man who rebels against the Mughal King and should consider him as a rebel against the Portuguese King.

2

I consent to this .... ; in the same way the Mughal King should behave towards us.

3

There should be Communication between the two Parties through envoys and letters. In order to make their friendship firm, an envoy from the Mughal King shall be sent to the Kingdom of the Firangis. He shall be treated with befitting royal honours and he shall look after the State affairs so that there may not be any breach in our friendship.

3

I agree to this clause. The ambassador shall be treated with respect in accordance with the rules made by the Kings. Both Parties shall treat them with respect and honour.

4

Orphan subjects of the Mughal King, whether Hindu or Muhammadan, shall not be converted to Christianity by force.

4

In our religion it is not allowed to convert any one by force. I shall issue orders accordingly. But if they embrace our faith willingly, they shall not be handed over to you, and shall be treated kindly.

OC

OC

M. Allau-d din, son of Said, blooming to the world like a happy morning.

Viserre Kondi Vaisri  
of High Position.

*By order of King Alamgīr this document is written  
and the Firangis have agreed thereto.*

## II

## A MUGHAL BANQUET

The following contemporary European description of a banquet given by Asaf Khān to the Emperor Jahāngīr, on the occasion of the marriage of his daughter (Mum Tāj) with Prince Khurram (Shāh Jahān), is interesting as showing Mughal etiquette :—

" The banquet was given in the principal hall of the bath (*ghusal khāna*), in which, besides the fixtures, there were added on this occasion rich carpets of silk, silver, and gold, which covered the floor, serving as ground-tables, according to the native custom, as also for seats for the guests; and these coverings were useful, because in the four corners of the hall were other similar tables, each of five steps, and all enriched with Persian coverings of gold and silver, serving for stands and dresses; all covered with different vessels of gold in which the sight had full occupation, distinguishing in some the variety of jewellery used, and in others, instead of it, the very fine and brilliant enamelling varying the material, assimilated the colouring. This superb display was accompanied by various and large perfume-vessels and silver braziers of extraordinary forms placed in order all round the hall, in which burnt very sweet perfumes composed of amber, civet, and other blended pastiles which in their union delighted the sense of smell. At the entrance of this beautiful hall the water-works on one side delivered seven streams, whose silver pipes of admirable make and considerable size, were adorned with thin plates of enamel, which through their elevated heads discharged fine threads of scented waters, which, falling in a large basin of the same material, kept it always half full. Then, discharging by another part, what was received was thus able to be always used for those washings of the feet which in Mughal manners is one of the most essential parts of ceremonial courtesy. In the middle of this was placed for the occasion a *dester chana* (*dastarkhwan*) or 'table-cloth, as we should say, of very fine white tissue, in which were woven artificial flowers of gold and silver. In the chief place of this table were two great and beautiful cushions of cloth of gold and satin, on which were others, smaller, of cloth of silver, also satin. This was all the display of the imperial table, including a want of napkins, which they do not use.

" At this when the time came, arrived the Emperor, accompanied by a great train of beautiful and gallant ladies who came in front, very richly dressed, in cloth of gold, blending with the rich and various works of coloured silk; wearing on their necks collars of gold, with ropes of pearls, and their heads dressed with silver garlands. Behind this slightly feminine society came the Emperor between his mother-in-law and his daughter, having the one on his right hand and the other on his left. Behind followed, presently, the Crown Prince Sultan Dārā Sheko, having on his right hand his grandfather Asaf Khān.

" Whilst this company was arriving, they presently began to play in the neighbouring rooms many and various instruments until the Emperor was seated in the middle of the cushions that I have

mentioned, having at his shoulders two venerable matrons, who stood with splendid fans to drive off the troublesome flies—when suddenly the hosts and their children fell on their knees before His Majesty, who, laying his hand upon his mother-in-law bidding her rise, and calling her mother, seated her on his right hand—a favour which both her husband and her sons so highly appreciated, that they presently showed their estimation of the gracious act by the most profound reverences to the Emperor—who, to enhance it the more—made them also sit at the table, which they did not do till the third command, when they took their seats at its extremity ; the grandsire placing the princess between. When all these ceremonies were accomplished and everyone was seated in the above order, there were presently heard most sweet voices singing of the victories which His Majesty had gained over his enemies. While this concert, which was accompanied by instrumental music, was proceeding, the arrangements for hand-washing made their appearance in the following order :—First entered four lovely girls related to Asaf Khān, and daughters of great lords, who in complexion and brilliancy of hair might compare with the fairest daughters of the frigid north, and not inferior in grace, elegance and beauty . . . These four beauties bore the instruments pertaining to His Majesty's hand washing ; to whom approaching after the royal ceremonies, one held before her a cloth of white satin, which he took up in his hands, and another held up a rich vessel of gold, in which were inlaid valuable jewels. These vessels are of quite superior invention to ours, moreover, there being deep in the middle and being covered with a grating allows the dirty water to disappear. This basin being placed before him, another comes with an ewer of the same material and value containing water with which he washed his hands, receiving from the last of these ladies the towel on which to wipe them. When this was finished appeared twelve others, who, although of lower rank than the former, might appear with confidence in any presence. These having presented to the princes, though with less ceremony, the lavatory for their hands, took their departure, on which, by another door, the dinner was brought in, with a loud sound of wind-instruments, more confused and harsh than our own brass bands. This banquet was served in rich dishes of gold, borne by eunuchs gallantly attired in the Hindustani style, with trousers of variegated silks and snow-white cloaks, at the same time displaying the precious unguent with which they were perfumed, and also concealing their abject and darksome skins. Of these the four chief ones placed themselves near His Majesty, doing nothing but handing up the courses which the other eunuchs brought to two beautiful girls who were on their knees at the Emperor's side. These bring forward the

food alternately, and similar other serve the drink and take away the dishes which are not used there . . . . At the end of the conversation, the banquet having lasted four hours, . . . . entered twelve dancing women, who performed in a manner unsuited to Christian society; after which appeared in the midst three beautiful young ladies, in gay and costly garments bearing in their hands three large and splendid dishes of gold, filled with precious diamonds, pearls, rubies, and other valuable gems."

### III

#### A MUGHAL PAGEANT

The following picture of a military march of the Mughals is from the pages of Manucci :—

' At 3 o'clock in the morning the march began. First went the heavy artillery, which always marches in front, and is drawn up as an avenue through which to enter the next camp; with it went a handsome boat upon a large car, to ferry the royal person across any river when necessary; then followed the baggage. In this way, when morning broke the camp was free, leaving only the cavalry and infantry, each in its appropriate position. With the rest, in addition to the other transport, went 200 camels loaded with silver rupees, each carrying 480 pounds weight of silver; 180 camels loaded with gold coin, each carrying the same weight; and 150 camels, loaded with nets used in hunting tigers.

' The royal office of record was also there, for the original records always accompany Court; and this required 80 camels, 30 elephants, and 20 carts loaded with registers and papers of account of the empire. In addition to these, there were 50 camels carrying water, each camel bearing two full metal vessels for the royal use. The princes of the blood royal marched in the same fashion, each according to his rank. Attending on the King are eight mules carrying small tents, which are used on the march when the King desires to rest, or to eat a little something, or for any particular necessity. Along with them are two mules carrying clothes, and one mule loaded with essences of various odoriferous flowers.

' It is the custom of the Court, when the King is to march the next day, that at 10 o'clock of the night the royal kitchen should start. It consists of 50 camels loaded with supplies, and 50 well-fed cows to give milk. Also there are sent dainties in charge of cooks,



from each one of whom the preparation of only one dish is required. For this department there is an official of standing, whose business it is to send in the dishes sealed up in bags of Malacca velvet, *et cetera*; and 200 *culles* (*qulis*), each with his basket of chinaware and other articles; further, there are 50 camels carrying 100 cases packed with *sarapa* (robes of honour); also 30 elephants loaded with special arms and jewels to be distributed among the generals, captains, *et cetera*. These arms are of the following kinds: swords, with their accoutrements, shields; various kinds of daggers, all worked in enamel and in gold, adorned with precious stones; plumes; also things to give to ladies, jewels to wear on the breast, and other varieties; also armlets of gold, mounted with pearls and diamonds. Again, there march close to the baggage 1000 labourers, with axes, mattocks, spades, and pick-axes to clear any difficult passage. Their commanders ride on horseback, carrying in their hands their badges of office, which are either an axe or a mattock in silver. On arriving at the place appointed for the royal halt, they put up their tents and place in position the heavy artillery. When the light artillery comes up, it is placed round the royal tents. Aurangzeb started at 6 o'clock of the day, seated on the throne presented to him by the Dutch. To carry this throne there were twelve men; in addition, there were palanquins of different shapes, into which he could get when he pleased. There were also five elephants with different litters (*cherollas*) for his own use whenever he desired. Upon his issuing from his tents the light artillery began the march from its position round them. It was made up of 100 field pieces, each drawn by two horses.

The following is the order of the King's march: At the time when he mounted the throne and issued from his tents all the war-like instruments of music were sounded. At the head came the son of the deceased Shekh Mir with 8000 cavalries. In the right wing was Assenalican (Hasan 'Ali Khān), son of Alaberican (Allawirdi Khān). This is the Allawirdi Khān who caused Prince Shāh Shujā to get down from his elephant at the battle of Khajwah. Hasan 'Ali Khān commanded 8000 horsemen; the left wing, consisting of 8000 horsemen, was commanded by Muhammad Amin Khān. In the rear of these two wings were the mounted huntsmen, each with his bird of prey (hawk) on his wrist. Immediately in front of the King went nine elephants with showy flags, behind these nine were other four, bearing green standards with a sun depicted on them. Behind these elephants were nine horses of state, all adorned and ready saddled; after these horses came two horsemen one carrying a standard with Arabic letters on it, the others with a kettledrum,

which he struck lightly from time to time as a warning that the King was approaching.

'There was no want of men on foot, who advanced in ordered files on the one side and the other side of the King ; some displayed scarlet, others green, pennants ; others, again, held in their hands their staves, with which they drove off people when any one made so bold as to draw near. There were on the right and left many horsemen with silver staves keeping the people back. Among the men on foot were some with perfumes, while others were continually watering the road.

'By their side was an official provided with a description of the provinces, lands, and villages through which the King must pass, in order to explain at once if the King asked what land and whose province it was through which he was passing, these men can give him an account of everything down to the petty villages, and the revenue obtained from the land.

'Other men march with a rope in their hands, measuring the route in the following way : They begin at the royal tent upon the King's coming forth. The man in front who has the rope in his hand makes a mark on the ground, and when the man in the rear arrives at this mark he shouts out, and the first man makes a fresh mark, and counts "two." Thus they proceed throughout the march, counting "three," "four," and so on. Another man on foot holds a score in his hand, and keeps count. If perchance the King asks how far he has travelled, they reply at once, as they know how many of their ropes go to a league. There is another man on foot who has charge of the hourglass, and measures the time, and each time announces the number of hours with a mallet on a platter of bronze. Behind all this the King moves on his way quietly and very slowly.

'So great is the dignity with the Mogul King's travel, and the delicacy with which they are treated, that ahead of the column goes a camel carrying a white cloth, which is used to cover over any dead animal or human being found on the road. They place heaps of stones on the corners so that the cloth may not be blown away by the wind. When he passes, the King stops and asks the why and wherefore.

'Behind all these squadrons rode on horseback the Princes Sultan Muazzam and Sultan Azzam. After the King came the horsemen, four with royal matchlocks enclosed with cloth-of-gold bags ; one bore his spear, one his sword, one his shield, one his dagger, one his bow, one the royal arrows and quiver ; all of these in cloth-of-gold bags. After the weapons came the captain of the guard with his troops, then the three royal palanquins, and other palanquins for

the Princes, then, after the palanquins, twenty-four horsemen, eight with pipes, eight with trumpets, and eight with kettledrums. Behind these mounted musicians were the five royal elephants bearing litters (*cherollas*), also three elephants, one of which, that in the middle, bore three hands in silver upon a cross bar at the end of a pole, covered with its hood of Malacca (velvet). These signify "Observer of the Mohamedan Faith." The other two bore hands in the same style which signify "Augmentor and Conservator of the Faith." On the right of this middle one was another elephant which displayed a plate of copper (*lamina*) upon a staff with engraved letters in Arabic meaning "God is One, and Muhammad just." The other had a pair of scales, which means "a King dealing with Justice." On the right (? left) hand was another elephant bearing a crocodile's head with a body made of fine white cloth, which when moved by the wind, looked like a real crocodile, signifying "Lord of the Rivers."

' On the left went by an elephant showing a spear, which means the "conqueror", to its left again, another with the head of a fish having a body made of cloth, and when swaying in the wind this looked like a great fish, and it means "Lord of the Seas." All these elephants were decorated with valuable housings and ornaments. They were followed by twelve more bearing larger kettledrums, and other instruments made of refined metals not employed in Europe. They are of the nature of large dishes, which, being beaten one against another, make a great noise. These musical instruments are employed by Armenians, Syrians, and Maronites in Syria at church solemnities and at weddings; they are also used at such events by the Turks. After the musicians came Rāja Jai Singh with 8000 horsemen, serving as rear guard. Be it known to the reader that each division of those spokesmen had six highly adorned elephants with rich trappings, displaying on brilliant flags the device of its commander.

' It would be very lengthy to recall all the details of this march, the Moguls being extremely choice in such matters, overlooking no detail that could minister to their glory.

' It remains to state that ahead of all this innumerable throng there always moved, one day ahead at the least, the Grand Master of the Royal Household, with other engineers, to choose an appropriate site where the royal tents should be unloaded. For this purpose is always chosen a pleasant spot. The camp is divided in such a way that on the arrival of the army there may be no confusion. In the first instance they fix the site of the royal enclosure, which, by measurements I subsequently took several times, occupies

500 paces in circumference. Behind the royal quarters is another gateway, where the women live, a place much respected. After this is arranged, they fix the positions of the tents of the Princes, the generals and the nobles. This is so managed that between these tents and the royal tents there should be a wide space. The central space is encircled by scarlet cloths, having a height of three arm-lengths, and these serve as walls. Around these enclosing screens are posted the field pieces in front of them is a ditch, and behind them are palisades of wood, made like net-work, which open and shut just like the ancient chairs of Venice. At the sides of the gateway, at a distance of 130 paces, are two tents, holding each nine horses, most of them saddled. In front of the gateway is a large raised tent for the drummers and players of music.

Among the special royal tents are some where the King gives audience ; these are supported by small ornamented masts upon which are gilt knobs. No one else may make use of these knobs, only persons of the blood royal. On the top of a very high mast is a lighted lantern which serves as a guide to those who arrive late . . . When the King comes out of his tent, to begin a march, the Princes, nobles, and generals throng round to pay him court, each one bringing forward some short request, to which a brief answer is given. They accompany the King to the end of the camp in which they had halted for that day, then each departs to his proper place in his own division . . . When the advance tents come into site, the musicians commence anew to play their instruments until the King has passed through the gateway of the tents. Then the small artillery is discharged, while the queens and ladies offer to the King congratulations on arrival, saying : "Manzel mobārec" (*Manzil mu-bārak*) which means "Happy be the journey !"

#### IV

#### INDIAN SHIPPING UNDER THE MUGHALS

We have stated in the body of this work that, perhaps, Indian shipping and ship-building suffered comparative neglect at the hands of the Mughals. Really, this subject needs careful investigation before we dogmatise. The following evidence cited by the late Prof. Chabiani, in his valuable study of "The Economic Condition of India during the Sixteenth Century," is of considerable interest :—

"Our foreign travellers", observes Prof. Chabiani, "speak not only of 'many ships' and 'large trade' in the many ports of India

mentioned by them, but also of many Cambay, Bengala and Malabar ships' at the foreign ports . . . . The Venetian Nicolo Conti observes that the Indian ships then were '*larger than ours* (Venitian), capable of containing 2000 butts, and with five sails and as many masts.' Their lower part is said to have been constructed with triple planks in order to withstand the force of tempests; but some ships were so built in compartments that 'should one part be shattered, the other portion remaining entire accomplish the voyage' . . . . Calicut is described by Abdur Razaak as 'one of the greatest shipping centres of the world in this period,' and men of Calicut as 'bold navigators known as the Sons of China,' whom the pirates did not dare to attack . . . Not content with their *atalvas fustas* and *zambucos*, the merchants of Goa met the Portuguese menace by gathering together a great sum of money and building in the Goa river 'fair galleys and *brigantines* after the Portuguese fashion and style' and 'made such good speed that in a short time a *great* part of the fleet was ready,' proving thus the existence of special facilities for ship-building on the Western coast . . . One of the Gujarat ships stopped by Sir H. Middleton on its voyage to the Red Sea in 1612 was 153 feet long, 42 beam and 31 deep and said to be 1500 tons burden; and Edward Terry tells that . . . 'In these ships are yearly abundance of passengers, for instance, in one ship . . . that year we left India, came seventeen hundred.' And this in an age in which English ships were 300 or 350 tons at most." (For further information read Chablani, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-69.)

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